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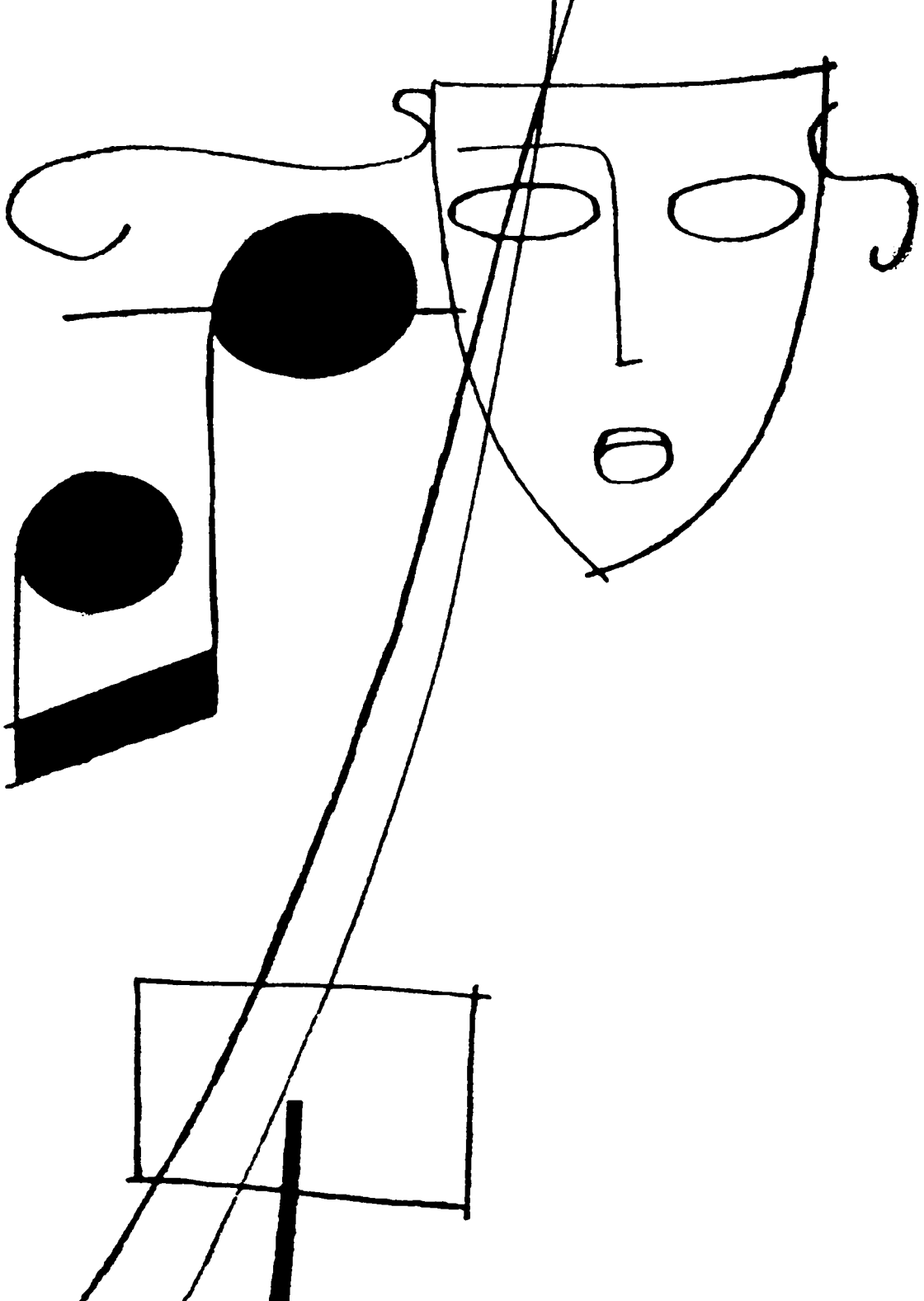

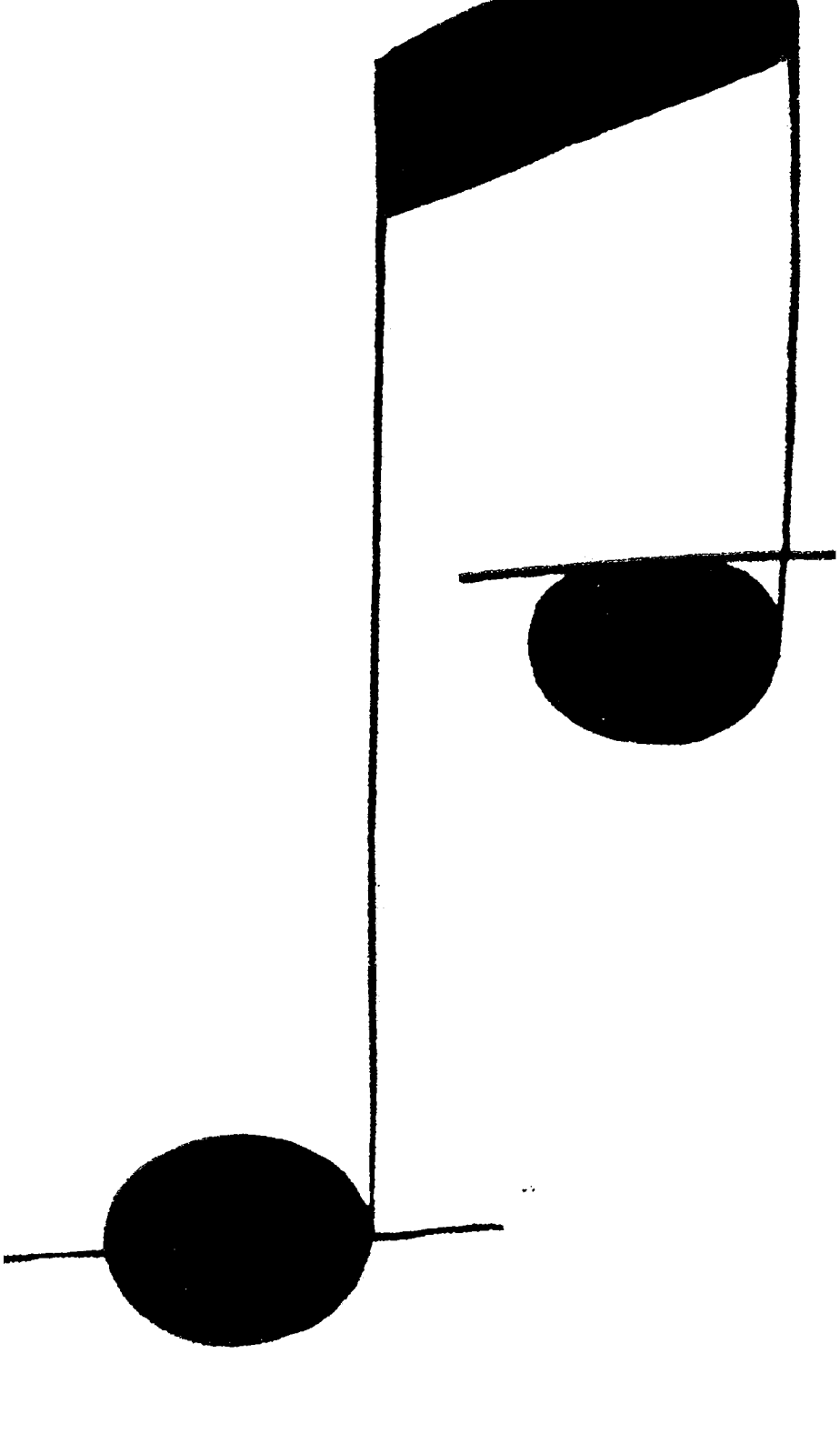

SOVIET
ARTS

SOVIET

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MUSIC

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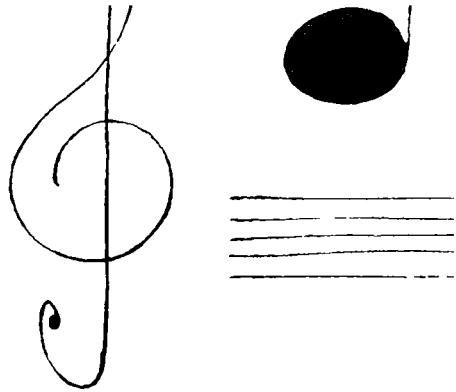
СОВЕТСКАЯ МУЗЫКА

CONTENTS

	Page
Preface	7
Symphonic Music	15
Oratorios, Cantatas and Vocal-Symphonic Poems	81
Opera Music	97
Ballet Music	127
Chamber Music	147
Popular Song and Operetta	167
By Way of Epilogue	179
Name Index	181

PREFACE



Soviet music has travelled a long and intricate road in the forty odd years that have elapsed since the October Revolution of 1917. Expressing progressive humanist ideas, drawing upon the life-giving source of the multinational art of the peoples inhabiting the U.S.S.R., and developing further the traditions of the nineteenth-century European classical school, it has given the world many works of lasting value.

From pre-revolutionary Russia Soviet art received a very rich musical heritage. Besides the works of Mikhail Glinka, Modest Mussorgsky, Alexander Borodin, Pyotr Chaikovsky, Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov and Alexander Scriabin, on which generation upon generation of Soviet composers have been brought up, it included musical culture in general. By 1917 the level of Russia's musical culture (in particular, the interpretative art) was very high indeed. Just before the First World War the Russian ballet won fame in Europe; Russian singers—Fyodor Chaliapin, Antonina Nezhdanova and Leonid Sobinov—as well as the composer-pianists Anton Rubinstein, Sergei Rachmaninov and (somewhat later) Sergei Prokofiev toured the world with tremendous success. Russia had first-rate opera houses, conservatoires and symphony orchestras staffed with highly-qualified musicians—concert artists and pedagogues.

The young Soviet state was faced with the problem of acquainting the working people with true art, of teaching them to understand and appreciate the masterpieces of world culture, and of disseminating this culture among all the different peoples inhabiting the vast country.

Most of the Russian art workers set about this difficult and noble task with great enthusiasm. The best performers and music scholars became the teachers of musical youth among whom there were some talented composers. The compositions, teaching principles and educational activities of such venerable masters as Alexander Glazunov, Mikhail Ippolitov-Ivanov, Nikolai Myaskovsky, Reinhold Glière, and Sergei Vasilenko constitute the "bridge" linking the finest traditions of progressive Russian classical music with the new, socialist, musical culture.

Alexander Spendiarov, Armen Tigranyan, Zakhary Paliashvili, Meliton Balanchivadze and Dmitry Arakishvili, prominent Armenian and Georgian composers, laid the foundation for the national classical music of their respective peoples. Eminent Russian composers came to the assistance of the nascent professional music schools of the different peoples by composing the first operas and symphonic works based on the characteristic features of the music of these peoples. Such was, for instance, the first Azerbaijan opera *Shah Sanam* composed by Glière in 1924. He made an important contribution to the development of Uzbek opera by composing (jointly with Talib Sadykov, a young Uzbek composer) music to the play *Gülsara* (Tashkent, 1936), which subsequently the composers elaborated into an opera (Tashkent, 1949). *Leili and Mejnun*, another Uzbek opera, was also written by Glière and Sadykov (Tashkent, 1940).

Sergei Vasilenko based several of his symphonic suites on original folk melodies—*Turkmenian Pictures* (1931), *Soviet East* (1932), *Uzbek Suite* (1943), *The Ukraine* (1945)—and, together with Mukhtar Ashrafi, an Uzbek composer, wrote the operas *The Storm* (Tashkent, 1939) and the *Great Channel* (Tashkent, 1941). The example of Glière and Vasilenko was followed by many other gifted composers who put their professional skill into developing the new, just emerging national musical cultures. Among them were Yevgeny Brusilovsky who for many years worked in Kazakhstan; Vladimir Vlasov and Vladimir Feré who took part in the development of Kirghizian music, and Stepan Balasanyan and Alexander Lensky who made a valuable contribution to Tajik music. Russian composers have also done much for the music of Turkmenia, Tataria, Bashkiria, Yakutia, and Buryat-Mongolia.

Soviet music is sometimes spoken of as "Russian music." This is not correct, because Soviet art is the art of nearly forty nationalities, to say nothing of smaller national groups, and each contributes some-

Group of Soviet composers. Left to right: V. Muradeli, S. Mshvelidze (Georgia), S. Prokofiev, A. Khachaturyan, L. Atovmyan (Moscow). Photograph taken in the late forties

Group of delegates to the 2nd All-Union Congress of Soviet Composers (1957). Left to right: sitting—Y. Shaporin and T. Khrennikov (Moscow), standing—E. Mirzoyan (Armenia), Niyazi (Azerbaijan), O. Taktakishvili (Georgia), Z. Ismagilov (Bashkiria), N. Zhiganov (Tataria)

Large Hall of the Moscow Conservatoire at the time of the International Chaikovsky Piano and Violin Contest. March-April 1958

Composers' House in Staraya Ruza, one of the picturesque spots about 100 km. west of Moscow

The park in winter is a good place to ponder over a new composition

Every composer lives in a separate house of two or three rooms

After-dinner hours are the liveliest in Staraya Ruza. The composers gather together, discuss things and share creative plans. Left to right: composer B. Yampilov (Buryat-Mongolia), musicologist I. Nestyev, composers Y. Milyutin, B. Moshkov (Moscow), musicologist P. Pechersky (Latvia), composer G. Finarovsky (Ukraine)

thing all its own towards the development of Soviet musical culture, something that is characteristically and unmistakingly national.

An important feature of Soviet music is its mass character. In the Soviet Union there are thirty opera houses (three in Moscow alone) and about twenty conservatoires. Workers' and collective-farm clubs and palaces of culture which can be used as concert halls are to be found everywhere, including the remotest corners of the country. Amateur choirs, dance, vocal and instrumental groups, bands and orchestras are usually very active at these clubs, sometimes performing even whole operas and ballets. Here workers, collective farmers and student youth can study music and are given the opportunity of revealing their talents; not infrequently the more gifted enter conservatoires and music schools and become professional musicians. In the Soviet Union music has become available to the masses.

Amateur art—the widely popular form of activity in which the creative spirit of the people manifests itself—is a means of educating audiences, of acquainting the masses with great professional art, and encouraging new talent—composers and performers—to come to the fore. The potentialities latent in the people seem truly inexhaustible.

V. I. Lenin said: "Art belongs to the people. It must have its roots in the very thickness of the broad working masses. It must be comprehensible to the masses and beloved by them. It must unite the feelings, thoughts and will of the masses, elevate them. It must awaken the artist in them and educate them."

The task of creating new, revolutionary, music appealed to the composers from the very start. At the end of the first decade after the October Revolution the ranks of Soviet composers were replenished by a large group of young musicians educated in Soviet conservatoires. They were ardent advocates of revolutionary ideas, filled with enthusiasm and determination to create a new, progressive, and absolutely original music. But they did not know how to set about creating such art, what paths to take. So their searchings often led them to extremes and brought about something diametrically opposed to the desired results.

In the late twenties a number of young and inquiring composers in Moscow and Leningrad joined the Association of Modern Music (AMM). The Association, professing to identify revolutionary content with "revolutionary" expressive means defying tradition, actually based itself on decadent art. Affiliated ideologically—and later organizationally as

well—with the cosmopolitan International Society of Modern Music, the AMM was responsible for formalism in musical works of the late twenties and early thirties. Among its leaders were Leonid Sabaneyev and Vladimir Derzhanovsky, the critics who advocated the decadent trend, as well as Boris Asafyev, modernist-minded in those years, who signed his articles with his pen-name Igor Glebov.

Parallel with the AMM there was another militant organization which chose to call itself revolutionary. This was the Russian Association of Proletarian Musicians (RAPM) headed by the critics L. Lebedinsky and Y. Keldysh and the composer V. Bely. The association published several magazines, including *Proletarsky Muzykant* (*Proletarian Musician*) and *Muzyka i Revolutsia* (*Music and Revolution*). Its over-simplified understanding of the aims of Soviet revolutionary art made it intolerant not only of light popular music but even of the classical heritage and folk art. All such music was proclaimed antiquated and outdated. The RAPM was joined by a large group of young composers from the Moscow Conservatoire (including Alexander Davidenko, Marian Koval, Zara Levina, Boris Shekhter, Nikolai Chemberji) who had previously made up what was known as *Prokoll* (Production Collective). But the militant policy of the RAPM, not backed by any creative achievements, merely emphasized the abstract and artificial character of its platform.

In spite of the lively discussions within them and the publicity they enjoyed in the press, none of these groups and associations played any noticeable part in the development of Soviet music. The main stream of its development flowed past the compositions inspired by these groups. These compositions did not attract public notice: the people did not sing the mass songs turned out by the RAPM members while the formalistic scores of the AMM votaries did not stay long on concert programmes or on the stage.

A new era for Soviet music set in when its creative personalities ceased strife and joined forces in the common cause.

On April 23, 1932 the C.C. of the C.P.S.U.(B.) passed a decision on reorganization in literature and art. A single organization, the Union of Soviet Composers, was set up with its one publication—the magazine *Sovetskaya Muzyka (Soviet Music)*. The abolition of the narrow, circumscribed groups impeding the unification of the composers' forces, opened up new horizons before them. The reorganization proved par-

ticularly beneficial to the youth whose minds had been warped by the narrow dogmatic requirements of the AMM and the RAPM.

Today all the composers in the Soviet Union belong to the single organization, the Union of Composers of the U.S.S.R. They are united by one creative principle: all Soviet art armed with progressive socialist ideology must turn all its variety of forms and genres to the service of the people. The time dreamed of by Lenin has come and great realist music, addressed to the working masses, has been able to "awaken the artist in them and educate them." The beneficial results of successfully coping with the important tasks set before the composers of the U.S.S.R. by the Communist Party are manifest in the steady rise observed in Soviet music since the second half of the thirties.

The setting up of the Union of Soviet Composers has given musicians better conditions for creative work. When a composer wants to work on a new composition, he can now go to one of the Composers' Homes for Creative Work situated in some picturesque spot in the country where he can devote himself wholly to composition. The Union of Composers and the bodies subordinate to it, such as the Musical Fund and the Department for the Popularization of Soviet Music at the Musical Fund of the U.S.S.R., take charge of copying music, arranging performances, concert tours, composers' appearances, and so on. Each national republic and each large city has its own branch of the Composers' Union; its headquarters is in Moscow where congresses and plenary meetings of the Board are convened.

For a better appreciation of the advantages provided by this new system of organizing the composers' activity, let us recall the difficulties encountered by composers, even the greatest among them, in the past. Thus ran Hector Berlioz's troubled thoughts when a new symphony was taking shape in his mind:

"I dreamt that I was composing a symphony. On awakening next morning I recollected nearly the whole of the first movement, which I can still remember was an allegro in 2 time, in the key of A minor.

"I had gone to my table to begin writing it down when I suddenly reflected: 'If I write this part I shall let myself be carried on to write the rest. I may perhaps spend three or four months exclusively upon it, meantime I shall do no feuilletons, or next to none and my income will suffer. When the symphony is finished I shall be weak enough to allow my copyist to copy it out, and thus immediately incur a debt of one thousand or twelve hundred francs. Once the parts are copied I

shall be harassed by the temptation to have the work performed; I shall give a concert in which, as is sure to be the case in these days, the receipts will barely cover half the expenses; I shall lose what I have not got; I shall want the necessaries of life for my poor invalid, and shall have no money either for myself or for my son's keep on board ship!' These thoughts made me shudder! I threw down my pen, saying, 'Bah! I shall have forgotten the symphony tomorrow.' But the following night the obstinate symphony again presented itself, and I distinctly heard the *Allegro* in A minor, and, what was more, saw it written down. I awoke in a state of feverish agitation, and hummed the theme; I was about to rise ... but the reflections of the preceding night again restrained me, and when I awoke next day all recollection had vanished for ever."

What a tragedy for a great artist! In order to spare the composers precisely such tragedies the Soviet state gives them full financial security, ensures the performance of their music, in a word, provides conditions conducive to fruitful work. The state is in a position to do this because the October Revolution has made it owner of all concert halls, orchestras, concert-giving organizations, conservatoires, opera theatres and publishing houses. It is in the Soviet country and in none other that Franz Schubert's dream which he expressed in the words, "The state should support me in order that I could compose free from all care," has come true.

The setting up of the single organization of creative musicians and the general rise in all branches of Soviet culture, which began in the second decade of the Soviet state's existence, were not slow to manifest themselves in the results of the Soviet composers' work. The first tidal wave was observed in the mid- and late thirties. While among the works of the twenties the only ones to survive to this day were Myaskovsky's Sixth Symphony, Shostakovich's First Symphony, Glière's ballet *The Red Poppy* and the opera *Shah Sanam*, Paliashvili's opera *Daisi* and Spendiarov's *Almast*, the thirties produced a great number of masterpieces of Soviet music. Here are some of them: the Fifth and Sixth symphonies and Piano Quintet by Shostakovich; the ballet *Romeo and Juliet*, the cantata *Alexander Nevsky*, the opera *Semyon Kotko*, the Second Violin Concerto, the symphonic fairy-tale *Peter and the Wolf* by Prokofiev; the Piano and Violin concertos by Khachaturyan; the symphony-cantata *On the Kulikovo Field* by Shaporin; the operas

Colas Breugnon by Kabalevsky, *In Storm* by Khrennikov and *Kör Oghly* by Gajibekov, and songs by Dunayevsky and Blanter.

In the years preceding the Second World War the Soviet music style may be said to have reached its maturity. The first national classical music works were composed in the Soviet republics. Sergei Prokofiev returned from abroad and became active in Soviet music. New talented composers came to the fore: Dmitry Kabalevsky, Tikhon Khrennikov, Aram Khachaturyan and Shalva Mshvelidze. The high level attained by music in the Union republics was demonstrated at the festivals of literature and arts held during 1937-41.

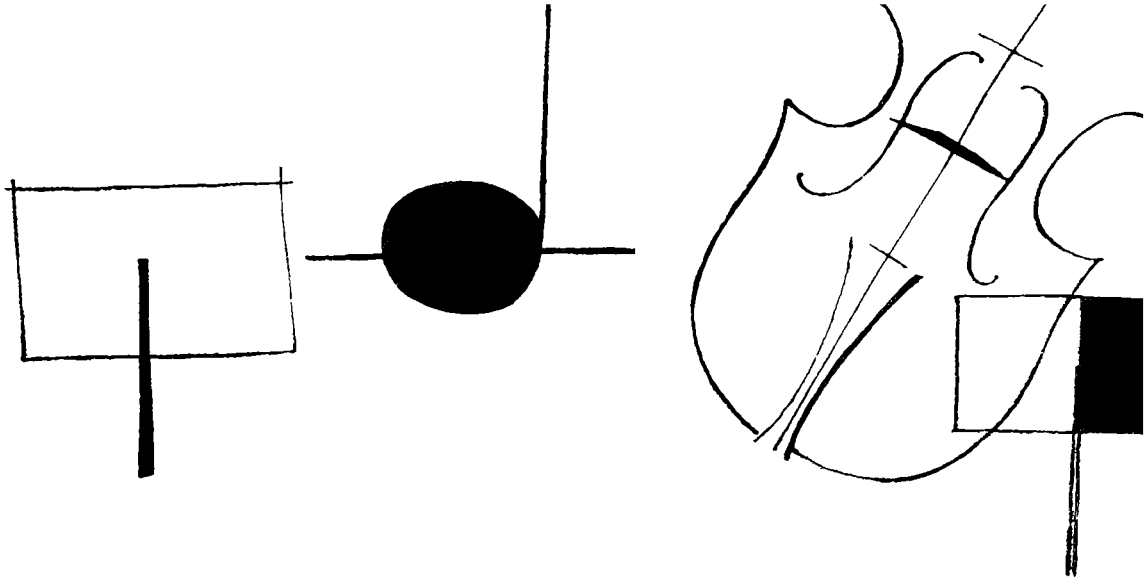
The forties and fifties brought a new harvest of gifted composers of many different nationalities—there were the Russians Yury Sviridov, Herman Galynin and Nikolai Peiko, Kara Karayev, an Azerbaijanian, Nazib Zhiganov, a Tatar, and the Georgians Alexei Machavariani and Otar Taktakishvili.

The war and post-war years have enriched Soviet music with new compositions, which are the pride of Soviet art. These are the Seventh, Eighth, Tenth and Eleventh symphonies, the Violin Concerto and the Vocal Cycle by Shostakovich, the opera *War and Peace*, the ballet *The Tale of the Stone Flower* and the last symphonies and sonatas by Prokofiev, the Twenty-Seventh Symphony and the last quartets by Myaskovsky, the poem *In Memory of Sergei Yesenin* and *Oratorio Pathétique* and vocal cycles by Sviridov, the opera *The Taras Family* and the instrumental concertos by Kabalevsky, the ballets *Gayaneh* and *Spartacus* by Khachaturyan, the ballets *Seven Beauties* and *The Path of Thunder* by Karayev, the ballet *Othello* and the Violin Concerto by Machavariani, the symphonies by Mshvelidze, Taktakishvili, Yanis Ivanov and Eugen Kapp, the opera *Jalil* by Zhiganov, and the songs by Solovyov-Sedoi, Novikov and others.

Unfortunately, not all that is best in Soviet music is well known abroad. Some of the works that are known are by far not the best. There are compositions worthy of the highest praise which, for some reason or other, have not yet "made their journey abroad."

Perhaps this book, while laying no claim to giving an exhaustive review of Soviet music, will help the interested reader to learn more about it. Soviet music has already found its way to the hearts of millions. Let us hope that in the future, too, it will serve as a means of bringing the nations closer together upon their journey along the road of peaceful coexistence and progress.

SYMPHONIC MUSIC



When the venerable Russian composer Alexander Glazunov came to New York in 1929 he had to answer numerous questions with which correspondents assailed him. What interested everyone was the state of music in Russia, whether it continued to develop, what were the composers known in the West working on, whether there were any new promising names. The first name Glazunov mentioned was that of Dmitry Shostakovich, never as much as heard of before; but with a prophetic foresight Glazunov asserted that the future of Russian music was intimately connected with the work of this young composer.

Glazunov had a perfect right to say this, because he had witnessed the development of Shostakovich's great talent and had himself taken part in fostering it. Actually, he was the first musician to take the boy's (Shostakovich was only twelve at the time) attempts at composition seriously.

This is what Shostakovich himself has to say: "In 1919 I was taking my examination at the Petrograd Conservatoire. A. K. Glazunov, who was present at the examination, asked my mother:

" 'Does he write music?'

"My mother answered in the affirmative. Glazunov heard my compositions and on his advice I began studying composition with Maximillian Steinberg.

"Glazunov supervised my studies at the conservatoire with a father's concern. He did not confine his care to keeping an eye on my academic progress and to acquainting himself with my compositions: he was touchingly solicitous about the state of my affairs, which were in a bad way after my father's death in 1922. The stipend I was given on his order was of great assistance to me in those days. Glazunov was in charge of the Borodin Fund into which the royalties for the performances of Borodin's *Prince Igor* were paid, and it was from this fund that my personal stipend came."

May 12, 1926, the date of Shostakovich's *début* as a composer, is a landmark in the history of Soviet music. That night in the Large Hall of the Leningrad Philharmonic, Nikolai Malko conducted the First Symphony by the nineteen-year-old composer who showed himself from the start an original and mature master of symphony. Shostakovich's First Symphony has subsequently been performed with invariable success by Arturo Toscanini, Leopold Stokowski, Bruno Walter and other well-known conductors.

The First Symphony by Shostakovich was more than just the new word of a talented composer: it was a sign of the times, being the first work of a great artist of the new generation, who grew up and took his place in art during the revolutionary and post-revolutionary years, an artist who belonged to the new, Soviet, intelligentsia. Perhaps that was the reason why Shostakovich later succeeded in giving the most convincing expression to the spirit of our times, for from the outset he perceived it with a Soviet man's awareness of the people as a great and rightful social force.

A burst of vivid flame of a youthfully daring, life-asserting and exuberant talent, that is what Shostakovich's First Symphony was. Suffice it to recall the introductory "dare-devil" fanfare combining challenge with the fine mockery of a new Thyl Uylenspiegel. A young and impudently self-asserting will and a host of disturbing twilight shapes veiling the horizon and obscuring the view—these are the moods of the introductory *Allegretto*. The fight against this mood of disquietude and final victory over it is the content of the driving and purposeful march, of the pulsating rushing movement that throbs in the *Allegro non troppo* (the symphony's first movement).

Irresistible gaiety with a touch of humour, life, now bubbling in a whirl, now filled with the poetry of the Russian landscape—these are the images evoked in the listener by the *Scherzo* (the second move-

ment). Its two themes—the first playful and graceful, based on a curious rotary motion, and the second, transparent, slightly archaic and of a pronouncedly Russian character—are both extremely appealing. The second of the two serves as the foundation for the middle section and is later used in the general development.

The third movement *(Scherzo* and *Lento),* with its broad meditative melody, already contains features characteristic of Shostakovich, his intent gaze on the world around him, his clear and faithful pictures of it, and his truly symphonic approach.

The symphony is crowned by a brilliant, life-asserting Finale.

One will not find profound dramatism or acute conflicts in this appealing music—that would be out of place in a work of a composer who had not yet turned twenty. But the youthful zeal with which optimism is asserted here is sufficient to make Shostakovich's First Symphony an important achievement of Soviet symphonic music.

Glazunov left Russia after the symphony had had its *première,* and we may well suppose that in speaking highly of Shostakovich's work to the American newspapermen he had in mind the young composer's First Symphony and that, moreover, he saw the future of the Russian school of symphony in Shostakovich.

If so, Glazunov was not mistaken.

Today, thirty years later, looking back on the long and difficult road travelled by Soviet music, Soviet musicians feel proudest of their symphonic music which has gained world recognition. The first name mentioned in this connection is that of Dmitry Shostakovich.

After his First Symphony there began for Shostakovich a difficult period of growth, filled with contradictions. The composer himself admitted in later years that his Second and Third symphonies were failures, works reflecting creative searchings but no attainments. And indeed, in his works of the late twenties and early thirties the young composer, afraid of eclecticism and influenced by the AMM ideas, engaged in a series of risky experiments with modernist and constructivist techniques then in vogue, sometimes resorting to grotesquery. He did attempt to write music about Soviet reality (the Second Symphony was a dedication to the October Revolution and the Third, a *May First* Symphony), but these attempts were not successful owing to the constructivist, abstract nature of the scores, divorced from art's natural expressive media. The two symphonies as well as the First

Piano Sonata, *The Aphorisms* for piano and the opera *The Nose* gave rise to heated discussions.

In spite of the contradictoriness of Shostakovich's early compositions (the opera *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk District*, the First Piano Concerto, 24 Preludes for Piano, the Cello Sonata), the live human emotions and the striving for a truthful portrayal of reality made themselves felt more and more persistently. The clear outlook of a Soviet artist who had broken with false, alien precepts of aesthetes, became increasingly more pronounced. The composer was going through a tormenting period of search for ways and means to express the new, Soviet, theme.

"There was an attempt at reflecting reality in my Second (*October*) and Third (*May First*) symphonies," Shostakovich wrote. "I was not successful in these compositions but working on them certainly proved useful. Neither was I successful in my Fourth Symphony which was not even performed by an orchestra. This work is very imperfect in form, too long, and suffers, I should say, from megalomania."

A new period in Shostakovich's work began with the Fifth Symphony which, first performed in Leningrad on November 21, 1937 under the baton of Yevgeny Mravinsky, has become the ornament of the world orchestra repertoire.

The first mature work of Shostakovich, his Fifth Symphony, contained—in outline—the ideological conception very characteristic of his subsequent compositions: from contemplation and meditation, to intense and fierce struggle, through suffering to a wise and tranquil acceptance of the world, which appears in a new light to the human soul that has emerged from the ordeals grown and matured.

This conception, clearly presented in the Fifth and Seventh symphonies, attains its full, classic, realization in later works, particularly in the Eighth Symphony, Third Quartet and Tenth Symphony. While in the Fifth Symphony this conception is solved in a personal, psychological manner, in the Seventh and Eighth symphonies it is treated as a tragedy of universal human significance.

The astonishing mastery with which Shostakovich symphonically develops, alters and transforms his themes is fully in evidence in the first movement of the Fifth Symphony (*Moderato*). The melodic "seed" of the concise epigraph-like introduction, the call (in the nature of the "Hamlet question"), is largely responsible for the thematic unity of the first movement. It gives rise to the sad and brooding, even somewhat

passive, first theme; its disquieting and stern calls precede a brief mild and meditative melody in the violins (the secondary theme) which is slightly disturbed by the throbbing chords in the accompaniment and, later, by the soft, stealthy tread of the double basses. We see that the main themes are not sharply contrasting. Both have the element of meditation, now exalted and now introspective, with a passing cloud dimming their brightness at times. All of a sudden the clouds spread, thicken and acquire fearful shapes—the themes are so transformed as to evoke dark and frightful images. Just so the natural course of human life is distorted by a brutal and hostile force. In the culmination the principal theme is presented as a cruel and sharply grotesque march, resembling the characterization of the obtuse and soulless soldiery and closely related to the famous Invasion Episode in the Seventh Symphony.

The intense and unremitting struggle leads to a fitful and impassioned episode, also growing out of the concise epigraph theme. Here it embodies that active and virile force which stands between the evil monsters and the bright meditative secondary theme. This latter theme, presented this time by the flute with chords in the harps, is even gentler and brighter. The ominous shadows have disappeared. The flute is echoed by the clarinet, and this creates a tranquil, soothing pastoral atmosphere. The melodic elements of the first theme of the principal subject, appearing in a new vibrant transformation, first in the crystal-clear timbre of the piccolo, then, softly, in the muted solo violin, and, finally, clear and transparent like drops of water, in the celesta, gradually die down.

The *Scherzo* (second movement) of the Fifth Symphony is the gayest and most animated. (Incidentally, it was this piece that Shostakovich played on the piano at a meeting held in New York after the First World Congress in Defence of Peace.) Light dance themes flit one after another, witty and graceful, perky and brilliant. These pages of colourful down-to-earth humour serve to set off all the more strikingly the psychological drama unfolding in the first and third movements.

The celebrated *Largo* (third movement) ranks among the finest creations of Shostakovich's genius. Sorrow, its dominant mood, is expressed through eloquent unhurriedly developing melodies, dramatic recitatives, pathetic exclamations and austere choral chords. The melodious recitative of the oboe (repeated by the flute) is particularly

moving in its plaintiveness and loneliness. The emotional content of this movement is reconciliation with life in spite of the bereaved heart's gnawing pain and bitterness.

The merry finale (*Allegro non troppo*), the least profound movement of the symphony as regards content, can nevertheless be considered the optimistic climax of the drama. If it does not follow logically from the development of the plot, yet it expresses the desire to take part in the general merry-making and thus forget one's heartache. Was it not what Chaikovsky expressed in the finale of his Fourth Symphony? This is what he wrote about it: "If you cannot find reason for enjoyment within yourself—look at other people. Go to the people. Look how they can be merry, giving themselves wholly to the feeling of joy."

Shostakovich's Sixth Symphony, also composed before the Second World War (first performed in Leningrad on November 5, 1939 under Y. Mravinsky) is less well known. And yet it is a very attractive, psychologically significant, lyrical and joyful work. It has three movements instead of the traditional four: a long and profound *Largo*, and two humorous *scherzos*.

The ideological conception of the Sixth Symphony is, to our mind, much closer to that of the Fifth than it would seem at first glance. True, it lacks a dramatic part that could be compared with the first movement of its famous "elder sister." But their deeply psychological *largos* and brilliant *scherzos* have very much in common; the optimistic conclusions drawn from the two symphonies also make them kin. There can be no doubt that these symphonic canvases express common ideas and one outlook. The composer said that the theme of his Fifth Symphony was "the personality of Soviet Man in the making," so the Sixth can be safely assumed to be the following chapter in the epic novel about that same hero, describing his new thoughts, joys and sorrows.

By the early forties Dmitry Shostakovich was a mature master of Soviet symphonic music. He had travelled a hard road of searchings—from the brilliantly talented and youthfully vigorous First Symphony, through the laborious and sometimes unconvincing attempts at expressing the modern theme by means of outwardly new methods (the Second and Third symphonies), to the real artistic heights in the Fifth and Sixth symphonies, giving a true picture of Soviet Man's personality in the making.

The great symphony composer of our day and age, Shostakovich has

an extremely original artistic personality. One can recognize his music by the opening bars. At the same time his music has strong ties with the classical tradition, continuing the main line of world symphonism, beginning with Beethoven, through Chaikovsky and Mahler, as well as Shostakovich's older contemporaries, Stravinsky and Prokofiev.

But the most important, the determining factor of Shostakovich's music, and in the first place of his symphonies, is his feeling of today, of its whole atmosphere, aspirations, tragic collisions and intense struggles. Perhaps no other musician has spoken so unreservedly, with such manly and unwavering directness about things that millions of people of the twentieth century have seen and experienced. At least no one has been able to mould these thoughts and emotions in such grand and philosophically generalized forms, overwhelming in their acuteness and expressiveness. Always one senses in his music the beating of a passionate heart filled with love for humanity, the heart of a great Russian artist-citizen. Shostakovich expressed his feelings particularly clearly in his war-time symphonies.

On June 22, 1941 Hitler's hordes invaded the Soviet country—the Great Patriotic War broke out. Soviet composers gave expression to the patriotic feelings of the people in their songs, cantatas, operas and symphonies.

The Seventh Symphony was born in Shostakovich's mind in the very first days of the war. At the end of July he started work on it.

This is what the composer wrote: "Almost the whole of the symphony was composed in my native Leningrad. The city was bombed from the air, the enemy's artillery was shelling it. And in those days I was working on my symphony. I worked much, at a high tension and quickly.... I was thinking of the greatness of our people, its heroism, the best ideals of humanity, man's fine qualities, the beautiful Russian scenery, humanism and beauty.... I finished the symphony on December 27, 1941."

The Seventh Symphony, that great composition of our times, marked the beginning of a new period in the work of its author. From then on he has concentrated on the most important, burning problems in the life of the Soviet people and of humanity as a whole; in his symphonies the personal and subjective themes were now linked with themes of universal significance.

One cannot but agree with the words of the writer Alexei Tolstoi: "The Seventh Symphony was born of the conscience of the Russian

people who unhesitatingly picked up the gauntlet thrown by the forces of darkness."

... War. Cruel forces of destruction shattering life; the life-and-death battle carrying away thousands upon thousands of human lives; the titanic and tragic struggle—such are the images of the inspired *Allegretto*—the symphony's first movement. Its themes are so concrete, its expressive media so clearly defined that every listener easily understands its programme.

The broad, manful and clear major main theme is calm and bright. Freely and evenly paced, well-balanced and firm, it speaks of confidence and unswerving determination. Further polyphonic development serves to reaffirm the confident and determined nature of this positive initial image.

The secondary theme (*Poco più mosso*) is more lyrical and tender; it is stated by the first violins, then taken up by the oboe and the English horn, and finally, by the clear, fragile, "glass-like" piccolo. Then amidst the transparent pastoral music one becomes aware of the soft but persistent beating of the side-drum. At first the drum-beats furnish the only background for the strangely-angular, seemingly elementary *staccato* melody in the strings.

"The war theme arises by itself and at first sounds like a simple, if a little sinister, dance, just like tame rats dancing to the piping of the rat-catcher," Alexei Tolstoi wrote. "Then, like the wind gaining in force, the theme begins to sway the orchestra, to dominate it; it grows, becomes stronger.... This is war itself advancing."

The Invasion theme is strikingly original, clear-cut and simultaneously grotesque and ugly, a veritable parody. It is a symbol of a dull and mechanically-cruel force which crushes, smites and destroys all living things in its inexorable, inevitable and ruthless advance. Just as the monstrous phantasmagorias of the great Spaniard, Goya, are a passionate protest against the horrors of war, the exaggerated and unreal nature of this theme evokes nightmare visions, inspiring the listener with hatred for the force of darkness.

A battle of unprecedented scope and fierceness ensues, breaking and finally destroying the driving force of the Invasion theme. But there is no going back to former carefree happiness and the recapitulation in a *minor mood* sounds like a sorrowful requiem for the fallen heroes; it develops into a broad song on the bassoon—a transformation of the lyrical secondary theme. In its original form the first theme recurs at

the close of the movement; it appears in the violins and flutes, calmed, brightened, as if purified by the thunderstorm just past. The calm of this theme is like a sigh escaping from a tired bosom, a moment of rest amidst the storm of war. The fight is far from being over—the muffled beating of the side-drum reminds us of this as does the far-off muted trumpet intoning the first phrase of the Invasion theme. Yes, it is but a quiet evening after battle which is to be resumed on the morrow.

The second and third movements, highly poetic and lyrical, are among the best pages of Shostakovich's music. Perhaps he had them in mind when he said: "I was thinking ... about man's fine qualities, the beautiful Russian scenery, humanism and beauty."

In the second movement—a lyrical intermezzo—a meditative theme in the violins, a narrative told with Russian warmth and understanding which seem tinged with melancholy, alternates with a tenser one in the oboe (later—in the English horn) accompanied by throbbing strings, which are alive with thoughts about life, about happiness and beauty—a remote dream in those war years.

Soviet music has few creations to compare with the sublime beauty of the *Adagio* (third movement). A full majestic chorale introduces the listener to the wonderful bright realm of nature, to the world of pure and lofty human emotions. The contemplative, bright and stirring pastoral melody of the flute has all the charm of an unpretentious rural landscape. Then follows an agitated monologue—the human element—in the rich timbre of the violins, reminiscent of Mahler's penetratingly expressive themes.

The bright pictures of life with all its lofty, noble and pure beauty as given in the two middle movements are opposed to the awesome pictures of war.

Fighting is resumed in the finale. It gives no clearly defined image of the hostile forces such as is encountered in the first movement, instead the composer re-creates the dramatic atmosphere of battle: episodes of vigorous action alternate with ones filled with sorrow and sad meditations. At the close of the finale its driving main theme of a heroic nature is transformed to paint the triumphant and jubilant picture of the victory to come (in combination with the broad-paced mighty principal theme of the first movement). Although the music of the concluding episode is a little too general in character, it is nevertheless convincing. One interprets this music as a bright result of a hard and

harrowing struggle, as a glimpse into the future expressive of prophetic faith in the happy tomorrow of liberated humanity. It would have been hard to be more concrete in 1941. But the optimism of this great tragedy was clear to everybody even then and the contemporaries defined the symphony as "a symphony of all-conquering courage."

First performed by the Bolshoi Theatre orchestra under the baton of Samuil Samosud in the city of Kuibyshev on March 5, 1942 the Seventh Symphony had an enthusiastic reception and in a very short time was performed in almost all the concert halls of the Soviet Union, Britain and the U.S.A. It was a major contribution of Soviet art to the nations' common fight against fascism.

Another major work of those years, Shostakovich's Eighth Symphony (first performed in the Large Hall of the Moscow Conservatoire under Yevgeny Mravinsky on November 4, 1943, also deals with the theme of mankind's struggle against fascism. Called to life by the events of the Second World War, as was the Seventh, the Eighth Symphony is both like and unlike its predecessor. The related subject, the common genre of tragedy, acute conflicts, high-strung emotionality, not to mention closeness of imagery, melodies, rhythms, methods of presentation and logic of development—all this makes the two symphonies parts of a monumental whole, an epic about the acutest conflicts of our day.

And yet the two years separating the Eighth Symphony from the Seventh proved for the composer (and for the entire people) years of intense spiritual growth. The more sensitive among the artists tried even at that early date to embrace at a glance the events unfolding before them, to comprehend their meaning, to rise above the immediate significance of separate episodes.

The Eighth Symphony was the result of such generalization, of treating the theme of the horrors of a world war as a *tragedy of humanity* as a whole.

The Seventh was more direct and straightforward: it was a cry from a tortured heart, and perhaps that was the reason why it found immediate response in every heart. But the Eighth was the fruit of long and painful meditations about life and the fate of humanity at the climax of the cruelest of all world wars. The Seventh was more concrete in expressive media: for all its grotesquery the Invasion Episode was definitely illustrative and even locally coloured—the German element in it is unmistakable. The force that is active in the Eighth is a

generalized, if ominous, "machinery of death," an invention of twentieth-century barbarians, totally devoid of any national, or just human, features (the third movement, *Toccata*). The finale of the Seventh speaks of acute struggle with victory a shining light ahead, a far-off but realizable dream. Yet it is victory, that is, a happy end of the war for the Soviet people. But the finale of the Eighth is a different matter: it is a gentle dawn over a world that has passed through the ordeal of titanic struggles and upheavals, it is a catharsis after a great tragedy. Victory as an event is not given here, there is only a timid sigh of relief—can it be that all those horrors are a thing of the past?

The Eighth Symphony, especially its breath-taking finale, brings to a focus the tremendous spiritual evolution experienced by the great Russian artist together with his people. Comparing on the one hand the somewhat superficial optimism of the finale of the Fifth, which does not of necessity follow from the development of the plot, and the active, dramatic, though stated in too general terms triumphant finale of the Seventh, with, on the other, the bright and essentially humanist finale of the Eighth, one arrives at a simple truth: outward pomp and flourish are rather the attributes of festivity generally than of an inner psychological state of man, of *one and every man* who has experienced such moments of joy. When, in the Fifth Symphony, the young composer was speaking of victory in general, he probably was not aware of the full import of that concept. In the finale of the Seventh Symphony, too, the idea of the remote victory is still somewhat abstract and superficial, although here the appearance of this image is more justified.

The entirely different quality of the finale of the Eighth Symphony lies in the fact that the composer who had attained spiritual maturity and gained wisdom through experience, was able to assess the meaning and price of military victories at their true value. Shostakovich would not be a great humanist artist of the twentieth century were he to indulge in trumpet flourishing and jubilation over the ruins of cities and fields steaming from hot human blood. The great Russian national tradition has always been to expose the horrors of war, to strip its monstrous soul (take for instance *The Apotheosis of War*, a painting by V. Vereshchagin—a pyramid of human skulls amidst a devastated steppe). Shostakovich's Eighth Symphony is true to this tradition.

"This music bewilders, overwhelms you, it conquers the listener all at once with a single word uttered in a whisper," the author Jean

Richard Bloc wrote about the Eighth Symphony. "There is a fierce din of battle interrupted by an enchanting voice; the roll of thunder alternating with dances of the dead and songs of the living; repose on the brink of a volcano . . . dreams of the future amidst shell-fire. And it is that song of tenderness and the future that have the last say. . . .

"To me this symphony seems a road to happiness in the midst of stormy elements—and this, too, is in keeping with the spirit of 1943. The happiness promised to us in the *Passacaglia* and pastorale of the finale is a well-gained and convincing one. Thus a work of art is revealed in its finale true to the demand of Aristotle—in a catharsis purifying the passions."

The symphony's first movement *(Adagio—Allegro—Adagio)* showing an affinity with the first movements of the Fifth and Seventh symphonies, depicts the tragic experiences of our contemporary, the troubled thoughts and cravings aroused in him by the terrifying collisions of the war years.

The two main themes in the exposition of the *Adagio* are closely related in their mood of profound and grim meditation. Each of them, however, contains distinct characteristic elements, "seeds," which in the course of subsequent symphonic development give rise to luxuriant and sharply contrasting "outgrowth." The principal subject consists of two different musical elements: a stern and energetic call of the strings in the style of Bach's majestic themes that may be likened to the orator's invocation establishing the atmosphere, and a sad and unhurried melody in the violins. The two elements are further presented in combination and developed polyphonically.

The secondary subject is tender and modest, if somewhat cool and retiring; the intermittently pulsating accompaniment in an odd time (five-four) lends to it a tinge of subdued agitation. All the main themes in the exposition are performed by the strings, the cantilena episodes are given over to the violins (sometimes to the English horn), and this makes for the human warmth of the music. The listener gains access to the inner world of a pure human heart, a human mind troubled by uneasy thoughts of life, of our days.

The development of ideas, the transformation of the musical material in the Eighth Symphony is distinguished by unwavering logic and poignancy. An episode of mounting dramatic intensity, a whirlwind of thoughtless and cruel movement, is followed by a brutal and pressing march. Its monotonous and ponderous rhythm, calling to mind the

ticking of a clock or the whirr of some big and precise machine, is like the tread of some relentless force. Against this tormentingly monotonous background is heard the distorted melody of the principal subject (its second element); announced by the harsh timbres of the trumpets and trombones, it becomes blatently warlike.

The march advances, its music gains in intensity, becomes more raucous, pitiless and savage. It rushes on in an unrestrained avalanche of sounds and suddenly comes against an unexpected obstacle: a fierce, piercingly dissonant outburst shatters the whole of the orchestra—this is the tremendous clash of the evil pressure of invasion and the heroic force of resistance, represented here by the first, energetic and active element of the principal subject in the trumpets and trombones.

Then all is still; the deadly wave of war, with the roar of tanks and the din of aircraft, the bursting of shells and the rumble of cannonade, is past. The tortured and stupefied man who miraculously finds himself alive sees an endless clear sky above him and heaps of smoking ashes around.... This silence coming after a frenzied shriek of the orchestra produces an extremely strong impression. In the scarcely audible tremolo of the strings, gentle like the murmur of the breeze, one hears the throbbing of a live human heart. The long and sad solo of the English horn is full of inexpressible pain and the feeling of loneliness; the mood is very far from that of the principal theme and yet the melodic elements of this solo come from it. When the English horn, sadly and meditatively, begins the melody of the subsidiary theme, it appears in a new colour; one listens to it as to the words of a man who has come through a crisis, experienced a terrible ordeal. This episode has the best right to be called a psychological portrait of our contemporary. Gradually a complete calm settles: the agitated throbbing of the accompaniment dies down, the melody is taken by the warm-toned cellos and later, violins. The echoes of the "call" from the first theme are heard in the coda, but here it becomes gentle and tender, sounding like a lullaby. At this moment there emerges a short melodic element whose meaning will be fully revealed in the finale.

The traditional *Scherzo* is substituted in the Eighth Symphony by two movements, an *Allegretto* (2nd movement) and an *Allegro non troppo* (3rd movement), both quite unusual as to form and sequence. The two movements are marches, malicious and belligerent, and their appearance one after the other has always puzzled the scholars. What a flagrant violation of the contrast principle! But when regarded in its

entirety, the composition of the symphony justifies this breach of tradition.

The guiding idea here is the sharpening and deepening of *one* image from movement to movement, the characterization of the forces of evil, of fascism, of death. In the first movement only one episode was associated with all this—the intrusion of the mechanical and cruel forces into life; the second (*Allegretto*) presents a more concrete, one may say, everyday characterization of soldiery. It is an obtuse cumbrous march with the typical whistlings in the flutes and oboes, the tramp-tramp of thousands of iron-heeled jack-boots out to enslave Europe. Still this movement deals with *men*. Men who fight, who trample down cornfields, whistle silly tunes (the insipid solo of the piccolo).

Things are quite different in the third movement (*Allegro non troppo*) in the form of a toccata. This, too, is a march of evil forces and yet it is fundamentally different. While the second movement could be construed as a specifically treated *Scherzo*, here the composer created an image of a higher, generalized plane, possessing a philosophical significance and devoid of everyday touches. This is the image of ruthless mechanized death, an allusion to those achievements of modern war technique of which no man of the twentieth century concerned for the fate of humanity can think without a shudder. In this lies the humane message of this terrible music.

The incessant (*ostinato*) movement in measured crotchets reiterated throughout the piece makes this music soulless and mechanical. There is something sinister in the curt, dry chords of the basses sounding like gun-shots, in the heart-rending screams of the oboes and clarinets, which now and again pierce the endless and monotonous melodic pattern (a kind of *perpetuum mobile*) of the toccata. The music gradually gains in volume, the sharp chords are repeated at a faster tempo, "the merciless stream of music comes down like a machine-gun barrage" (the words of B. Asafyev). The whole creates an impression of a monstrous machine in action.

The meaning of the third movement becomes perfectly clear when against the toccata rhythm there appears in the accompaniment the pattern of a lumbering dance or march, supported by the cymbals and the beating of the side-drum. It provides the background for a defiantly vulgar trumpet solo, the beginning of that universal malignant march when the whole planet seems to be swayed by the frenzy of war. Upon

its return the original *perpetuum mobile* becomes even more menacing and grim. The clanging of the kettle-drums, the trenchant shrieks of the wood-winds merge in a pandemonium of sounds. Suddenly all comes to an end.

A slow, epically majestic theme is heard in the basses. It has something in common with the deep meditations of the first movement. This is the beginning of the inspired *Largo*, the exalted and thoughtful *Passacaglia*. Its music flows in a continuous stream. Its sober meditation and fragile beauty (the pastoral episodes with the flute and clarinet solos) come as a contrast to the cruel "war machine," express the questions and searchings of a stirred human soul.

A C-major chord and a short motive of three notes emerge like the first gleam of the rising sun from a quivering silence. This sigh of relief (solo bassoon) is the beginning of the finale (*Allegretto*), a piece imbued with extraordinary lucidity, purity and brightness. The hurricane of war has swept past and this is the first peaceful dawn breaking over the tortured earth, the catharsis of the world tragedy. The themes of the finale are superbly beautiful and warm, seeming to "flow from the spring of the human heart," as Asafyev used to describe them. Besides, they reveal an affinity with Russian folk songs (the theme of the Fugue in the style of a Russian roundelay) and express a sense of harmony with Nature. The theme of the first movement appears for a moment like a reminder of the sorrows experienced, only to disappear finally, giving place to bright pastoral melodies.

It is in the Seventh and Eighth symphonies that the humanist features of Shostakovich's symphonism, carrying on in the mid-twentieth century the traditions of Chaikovsky and Mahler, stand out with particular clarity. His hero is no outstanding personality but an ordinary man, our contemporary, who has to bear all the horrors and hardships of a mechanized war, refined in its cruelty. These inspired and passionate pages overwhelming in their unsparing truthfulness are dedicated to the sufferings and heroic fortitude of millions of ordinary people who emerged from the sea of hatred pure and noble of heart, and who lived to see the dawn of a new and bright day.

The accusatory idea of the Seventh and Eighth symphonies made them not only outstanding artistic achievements of our era but courageous civic documents, in which the great Russian composer denounced war and demanded inviolability of the peace that was to come.

In 1945, after the war was over, Shostakovich composed his short

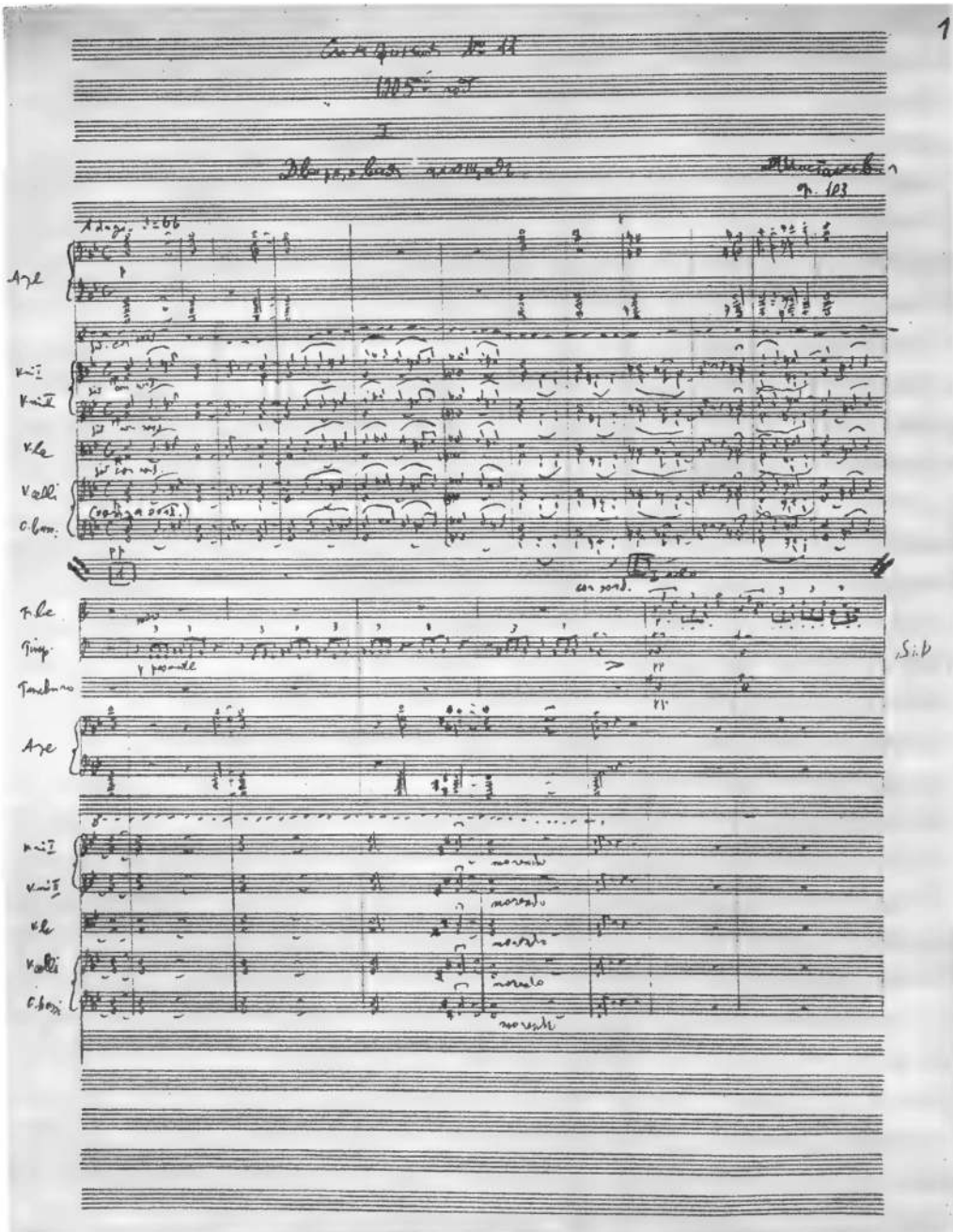
and gay Ninth Symphony. There were many who were disappointed, for they had expected a monumental "symphony of joy" from him. The symphony, however, was in perfect keeping with the general trend of his work. Shostakovich had no wish to depict reviews of troops, gay crowds of people, or the victory salute in Moscow, that is, the external show of general rejoicing; what he wanted to express through music was the happiness and gaiety felt by millions of people at that time. For this, he did not need an extensive canvas; an intimate chamber "symphony-*scherzo*" proved the most suitable genre.

Although astonishingly brief and exhibiting scrupulously finished details, the Ninth Symphony is not alien to the two grandiose and tragic symphonies that went before it. The Ninth Symphony appeals to the listener with its gay and playful "carnival" passages of wittily stylized neoclassical music in the spirit of Haydn (the first movement—*Allegro* and the fifth—finale), the warm lyricism of the second movement (*Moderato*) and the graceful playfulness of the third movement (*Presto*). At the same time there arise fearful shadows of the past, such as the sorrowful recitative of the bassoon answered by the menacing blare of the trombones (the fourth movement—*Largo*) and the sad recollections of all that is irreparably lost dimming the brightness of the joyful present. The ominous sounds cease and the bassoon begins to sing—at first reluctantly and "under its breath"—the elegant dance theme of the final *Allegretto*; the shadows scurry away and again the world sparkles with all the colours of the rainbow.

The Ninth Symphony was first performed in Leningrad on November 3, 1945 and in Moscow, on November 20 of that year with Yevgeny Mravinsky as conductor in both instances.

Eight years passed before Shostakovich wrote his Tenth Symphony. In that period the themes and genres of his compositions became more varied: in addition to a great number of incidental scores for films he composed a violin concerto (1948), a song cycle "From Jewish Folk Poetry," an oratorio *Song of the Forests* (1949) his Fourth and Fifth quartets, a cycle of preludes and fugues for piano (1951) and Ten Choral Poems for *a cappella* chorus to words by Russian revolutionary poets (1951).

Life's experiences were not lost on the composer. The theme of his Tenth Symphony is closely related to that of the Fifth, but in the later work he uses more subdued colours and its composition is more perfect and better balanced. In this work, too, he speaks of a noble heart

Dmitry Shostakovich

First page of the MS. score of Shostakovich's Eleventh (*1905*) Symphony

The *première* performance of the Violin Concerto by D. Shostakovich in Leningrad (1955). In the foreground left to right: conductor Yevgeny Mravinsky, violinist David Oistrakh and composer Dmitry Shostakovich

Nikolai Myaskovsky

confronted with grief and sorrow; here, too, the forces of darkness and evil are shown striking out at life with the suddenness of a hurricane. Shostakovich passionately and mercilessly exposes evil which stands in the way of human happiness. But the evil is never personal sorrow or misfortune: it always has a universal human significance.*

In the words of Yury Shaporin: "Thinking of Shostakovich, I came to the conclusion that he probably is the most truthful and honest artist of our time. Whether depicting the world of personal emotions or social events, his work is always characterized by this quality."

Shostakovich did not work long on his Tenth Symphony. He began it in the spring of 1953, and finished it by the end of the summer. In a letter to a friend in Moscow written in August of that year from his country house in Komarovo (near Leningrad) Shostakovich said that he was working on the finale which would not come off. Nevertheless at the beginning of the concert season that autumn Mravinsky had the completed score and began rehearsing it with the Leningrad Philharmonic orchestra. He conducted the *première* of Shostakovich's Tenth Symphony on December 17 in Leningrad and on December 29 in Moscow.

The first movement, *Moderato,* is typical of Shostakovich and at the same time possesses some new traits. The main theme is preceded by an introduction, austere and full of anxiety. The muffled "creeping" movement in the cellos and basses in a low register creates an atmosphere of unrest, watchfulness, and restrained sadness.

The main theme, a mild and tender typically Russian melody in the clarinet, is touchingly artless and chaste. Unlike most of the main themes in Shostakovich's compositions, this one is a plastic cantilena melody resembling a broad folk song. The resemblance becomes more apparent with the appearance of songful collateral parts.

Then the solo flute states a new theme (the secondary subject) which is soon taken up by the violins.

In the development section, the two themes of the exposition battle with the ominous motif of the introduction, which grows even gloomier and more sinister, revealing its actively hostile nature. In transforming with consummate skill the main themes so that their closeness be-

* The prevalent opinion that the Tenth Symphony was written on the occasion of the death of Shostakovich's wife Nina Vasilyevna is erroneous. She actually was present at the symphony's *première* in December of 1953. Her death occurred some eighteen months later.

comes more apparent, the composer brings the battle to a mighty climax which breaks off abruptly.... Again the tender theme is heard in the clarinet—the instrument which is used prominently in the recapitulation. The secondary theme, now waltz-like and fully revealing its lucid character, is played by two clarinets at the third. And such is the timbre of the clarinet that the impression of simplicity and purity remains with the listener throughout. He realizes that in spite of the anguish and sufferings, the symphony's hero (we should say "heroes," because it may well be assumed that the author means many people who have experienced similar collisions) has preserved intact the purity and nobility of his heart.

But the forces of evil have not been conquered: this is evident from the opening bars of the second movement, a fearful tempestuous *Allegro*. The music here forcefully depicts the tension and frenzy of motion which seize an enormous mass of people at the height of a fierce battle.

The stirring third movement (*Allegretto*) has certain traits in common with the first. The mood of deep and at times sorrowful meditation and the free alternation of varied and exquisitely beautiful themes reminds one of the famous *Largo* of the Fifth Symphony.

In the recapitulation the lyrical images have mellowed down, the turbulent *pizzicato* in the accompaniment sounds as a reminder of the storm that has subsided, and the gloomy theme of the introduction has disappeared altogether. The world is clear and bright after the recent thunderstorm.

This idea of the wise artist is borne out by the finale. It begins with an unhurried introduction (*Andante*) with solo oboe, flute and bassoon following one another. A brooding as if inquiring melody in the nature of a recitative is heard against a background of drawn-out chords in the strings. This melody is a remote descendant of the agitated and sad recitatives of the Eighth and Ninth symphonies and the Third Quartet, only there they alternated with the anxious questioning utterances of the forces of evil while here the sky is cloudless.

From afar comes a short motif, the beginning of a perky melody in the clarinet, at once echoed by the flute. At first it consists of only two notes to which gradually a continuation is added. Suddenly the violins merrily take up the whole melody of a graceful and carefree dance. That is the beginning of the playful and enchanting *Allegro* with a naive, almost Mozartean, main theme.

These bright themes are developed and become intertwined with the echoes of the songful introduction theme (*Andante*), then the music grows more dramatic and the central section of the development loses all connection with play or merriment. Suddenly all is still and a solo oboe intones a tender and sad theme of the *Andante*; then this music is stirringly sung by the muted strings. After that the good-natured bassoon again starts the carefree main theme of the *Allegro*. All of its themes are repeated in a swirl of dancing rhythm and the Tenth Symphony, the result of searching meditation of a most profound and sensitive artist of our time, comes to an end.

Shostakovich's Eleventh (*1905*) Symphony was first performed in the series of concerts in honour of the 40th anniversary of the October Revolution: in Moscow on October 30, 1957 under the direction of Nathan Rakhlin and in Leningrad, on November 3 of that year under the baton of Yevgeny Mravinsky. On May 28, 1958 it was performed with outstanding success by the Paris Radio orchestra under André Cluytens, and in June of that year Leopold Stokowski performed it on his tour of Moscow and Leningrad.

The Eleventh differs from the preceding symphonies in that it has a programme. Its different movements performed without a break bear the following titles: "Palace Square," "Ninth of January," "In Memoriam," "Tocsin." This symphony deals with a tragic episode in the history of the Russian revolutionary movement (the shooting of a workers' demonstration by the tsar's troops in front of the Winter Palace in St. Petersburg on January 9, 1905) and shows many new traits in Shostakovich's style.

Colourist orchestration and harmony in the first movement result in an all but tangible picture of a misty winter's morning over an immense and empty square on which the tragedy of deceived people is to be enacted. The musical image of an imposing and sinister square becomes a kind of leitmotif: in the second and fourth movements it stands as a symbol of the gloomy and ruthless stronghold of autocracy.

By skilfully weaving into the musical texture of different movements the melodies and melodic elements of well-known Russian revolutionary songs such as "The Varsovienne," "The Workers' Funeral March," "Rage, ye Tyrants!" "Sentry's Call" the composer realistically re-creates the atmosphere of the people's revolutionary struggle with tsardom. At the same time the song elements blend naturally with Shostakovich's

own style: they are developed, they acquire dramatism, and altogether seem to live a new life in the symphony (for example, the grand Requiem in the third movement based on the theme of "The Workers' Funeral March"). The musical material of his own chorus "Ninth of January," from the Ten Choral Poems to words by revolutionary poets written in 1951 and dedicated mainly to the events of the 1905 Revolution is also used extensively in the symphony.

The people's appeal to the tsar "O Father Tsar!" from a choral poem is given here as the symphonic episode of the suffering people's lamentations (second movement) while the grim and sorrowful exclamation of the chorus "Bare Your Heads!" becomes a leitmotif of the symphony. It is heard at the moment of the shooting of the demonstration and after that as an impassioned call to arms; in the finale this leitmotif gives rise to the exalted and sorrowful monologue of the English horn in memory of the victims of revolutionary struggle. As used in the symphony, the images of the choral poems take on extra grandeur and significance.

Very democratic and comprehensible in its idiom, the Eleventh Symphony is undoubtedly addressed to the mass audience. However, Shostakovich preserves in it his own highly original individuality which is apparent in the harmonies, melodies and timbre treatment, and particularly, in the nature of the musical images and structure of the symphony, as well as in the intensity of development depicting the antagonistic struggle between irreconcilable social forces, the conflict between light and darkness, humanism and cruelty.

In the Eleventh Symphony, which soon won popularity in the Soviet Union, Shostakovich's style gains further lucidity, it shows his steady progress towards the height of classical clarity and perfection, his desire to speak with the people in his humanist and sincere music. This is an instance of the deep-rooted inner urge to speak with the people, an urge felt by Soviet composers even more strongly than by their predecessors, the Russian classics, such as Mussorgsky. In 1958 his Eleventh Symphony earned Shostakovich a Lenin Prize.

A survey of Shostakovich's symphonic works cannot be considered exhaustive without mention of his instrumental concertos. The best among them is his Violin Concerto (1948), a forceful and highly artistic work, whose wealth of ideas and images and cyclic structure bring it close to a symphony.

The first movement, a nocturne (*Adagio*) cast in sonata form, is built

on two lyrical themes which afford no contrast but rather complement each other. There is deep thought and a hushed sadness in the music.

The impetuous "demoniac" *Scherzo*, written in a very sharp and complicated idiom, is the basic dramatic movement, its dynamism enabling it to substitute the missing first-movement *Allegro*. Its themes are related to those of the third movement of the Tenth Symphony, but here they have been made more "prickly," more dynamic. The solo part, a plastic cantilena in the first movement, now loses prominence and becomes one of the numerous parts in the intricate texture, participating along with them in the development of the imagery. A grotesque folk dance (the middle episode) provides the necessary contrast.

The noble and sublimely beautiful *Passacaglia* (the third movement, *Andante*) ranks among the highest lyrico-philosophical pages of Shostakovich. The austere theme in the basses is manly and meaningful; the inspired melody in the solo violin is extremely expressive. Layer upon layer of new parts are superimposed over the *Passacaglia* theme, leading up to a dramatic climax. The *Andante* closes with a long cadenza in which the themes of the foregoing movements appear in a highly developed and dramatized guise. The cadenza is followed directly by the finale (Burlesque, *Allegro con brio*), a brilliant, gay and festive piece. Dance themes reminiscent of Russian dances or folk instrumental tunes, freely follow one another. The majestic theme of the *Passacaglia* recurs at the end, but it, too, joins in the popular merrymaking. This theme closes the concerto.

"It has been my good fortune to be the first performer of Shostakovich's Violin Concerto," wrote Lenin Prize winner David Oistrakh. "This composition sets before the violinist a fascinating and noble task. If I may say so, he is assigned a very significant role to play, one enabling him not only to display his virtuosity, but, in the first place, to give utterance to the most profound feelings, ideas and emotions.

"Shostakovich's Violin Concerto is not readily grasped by the violinist. I recall that a clear perception of it came to me slowly and not without difficulty, I became more and more interested in the work as the days went by, until finally I found myself wholly under the spell of the music. The better I knew the concerto, the more intently I drank in its music, the better I liked it, the more eagerly I studied it, meditated on it, and succumbed to it."

The Violin Concerto was first performed in Leningrad with David Oistrakh as soloist and Yevgeny Mravinsky conducting on October 29

ment of Soviet symphony, was in 1917 a mature artist. At that time he was composing his Fourth Symphony.

In 1918 he completed his bright and winsome Fifth Symphony, the first Soviet work in this genre. Although not possessing a programme in any way connected with the events of the time and having no claims to great revolutionary ideas, it yet proved an important landmark in the composer's creative biography while its artistic merits earned it a permanent place in the repertoire.

This is how it was composed.

Myaskovsky asserted himself as an author of symphonic works at an early date, and between 1908 and 1914 composed three symphonies and a number of shorter orchestral pieces, such as the poems *Silence* after Edgar Poe and *Alastor* after Shelley, and a Sinfonietta.

The composer recalled in later years that "almost all these works were stamped with deep pessimism. I myself could hardly tell why. Perhaps the circumstances of my life were in some measure responsible.... On the other hand, my acquaintance, albeit slight, with the symbolists, 'congregated individualists,' and such like, might have exerted a certain influence on my rather raw psychology."

Then a change occurred in his life. In Myaskovsky's own words: "I was mobilized in the first month of the 1914-18 war and soon after was sent to the Austrian front.... The war added to my store of external impressions and inner experiences, and for some reason or other it also brought about a certain clearness in my musical thinking. Most of the sketches I made at the front were, if not altogether bright, at least much more 'objective' (many of the themes were incorporated in the Fifth Symphony, one of them being a Ruthenian carol I noted down near Lvov)."

The new moods and emotions inspired by life itself, which took the composer out of the musty atmosphere of decadent salons, brought him face to face with the rugged facts of war and placed him among simple, spiritually healthy people, found expression in the Fifth Symphony, completed in 1918. It was but natural that the folk element, not characteristic of Myaskovsky's early symphonies, found prominence in this one, together with a moving portrayal of the Russian countryside.

The first movement (*Allegretto amabile*) opens with a tender, exultantly-lucid pastoral melody (solo clarinet) against an undulating accompaniment in the strings. This theme calls to mind certain analogies

with some of Rimsky-Korsakov's musical landscapes, the likeness being, of course, not literal but confined to the two composers' depiction of the rolling, boundless and at the same time modest Russian scenery.

The composer Dmitry Kabalevsky wrote of this music: "This landscape gradually becomes animated, troubled, as if scorched by the flame of war, while against this landscape—and born of it—there grows and swells a folk-song melody, stern and determined, in which one detects the image of a Russian peasant who has drawn himself to his full height and is squaring his shoulders. This giant of a man has passed by, soon he is lost to sight, and again there is the still countryside, only its quiet and tranquillity are gone."

The second movement, *Lento*, is a touching, somewhat plaintive lullaby, reminiscent of Mussorgsky's peasant songs. But the music is full of anxiety and apprehension—sad thoughts are torturing the young mother. An onrush of life's tempest cuts short the melody in the middle episode; at the end it reappears, or, as Kabalevsky says, "the song is heard again as though a bereaved Russian peasant woman were singing it through her tears, and it is hard to tell whether she is lulling her child to sleep or mourning it."

In the third movement, *Allegro burlando*, a vigorous and temperamental *scherzo*, a number of song and dance tunes, including the simple melody of the Galician carol, follow one another. But even in this short genre picture one senses inner unrest and secret anxiety.

The bright finale, *Allegro risoluto e con brio*, built throughout on persistent march rhythms with piercing trumpet fanfares, contains an element of the heroic which serves to dispel the gloomy and anxious mood. At the end, the folk-song theme from the first movement appears, resonant and solemn, closing the symphony by re-asserting the triumph of the bright folk element.

The Fifth Symphony is distinguished from the rest of Myaskovsky's earlier works by its pronounced emotionality, by its subject-matter—the scenery and people of the composer's native country. Deservedly it won lasting prominence in Soviet concert repertoire.

For the subject-matter of his next, Sixth Symphony (1923), Myaskovsky chose a revolutionary theme. He worked on it with inspiration, and although to the Soviet listeners today his understanding of revolutionary events may seem artificial and erroneous, there is a great vital force and genuine feeling in the music with its stirring themes and dramatic collisions, still capable of drawing a response.

The composer wrote about this work of his: "The first stimulus was provided by the performance of the French revolutionary songs 'Ça ira' and the 'Carmagnole' I chanced to hear sung by an artist (I don't remember his name) who had recently come from France and who said he was rendering them the way they were sung in the workers' suburbs of Paris. When in 1922 the plan for the Sixth Symphony was ripe in my head (influenced partly by my reading of Werhaern's *Les aubes* with its sacrifice-for-the-sake-of-revolution theme), the song themes I had recorded were promptly assigned their proper places. The chaotic state of my outlook at the time of necessity determined the concept of the Sixth Symphony, which today seems strange with its motifs of 'sacrifice,' 'the soul leaving the body' and a kind of 'tranquil life' apotheosis at the close."

Thus Myaskovsky's Sixth Symphony does not draw the picture of the titanic battles of the epoch and of the mass heroism of the revolutionary people, but deals with the psychologic experiences of the Russian intellectuals, who took no direct part in the revolution but accepted it as a great, if not wholly comprehensible and comprehended, historical necessity. This approach explains the structure of the symphony, in which the first three movements describe the dramatic emotions of a troubled human heart, shaken to the core by events never experienced hitherto.

In the finale (*Allegro vivace*) the people's movement at last comes into its forceful own, pictures of revolutionary processions arise with the melodies of the "Carmagnole" and "Ça ira" presented in a broad development. But then follows a long "sacrifice for the revolution" episode: again the moaning is heard, again the *Dies irae* theme appears followed by the mournful melody of the Russian sacred chant "How the Soul Parted from the Body" in the clarinet. This theme recurs after a stormy dramatic development section, but this time it is sung by a chorus. The moaning is heard in the whole orchestra, and it is only at the close of the finale that the music becomes tranquil. The lyrical theme of the third movement (*Andante*) is repeated. A long-awaited calm follows the tempest.

We see, then, that in those years the composer's understanding of the revolution was rather vague, and he interpreted it as struggle in general. It is noteworthy that the finale dealing with the revolutionary theme contains no Russian melody, with the exception of the chant, and that the Russian people fighting for the revolution are symbolized

conventionally, in accordance with an abstract "bookish" tradition, by the melodies of songs associated with the French Revolution.

It was characteristic of contemporary Russian literature, too, to portray the theme of revolution through raging elements, sacrifice and general unrest. The analogy between Myaskovsky's Sixth Symphony, Alexander Blok's poem *The Twelve* and the first parts of Alexei Tolstoi's *Ordeal*—all written in the twenties—is very illustrative.

This is what Academician Boris Asafyev wrote about the symphony: "In Myaskovsky's Sixth Symphony the music throbs not merely with personal anxiety, although subjective pain, too, is present in it. It introduces into Russian symphony a strong feeling of anxiety for life, for its integrity, while the finale gives the tread of a mass of people. For Myaskovsky it no longer is a mob, but an inspired harbinger of wrath, a formidable tidal wave of human beings organized by vengeance, a collective character that has become an elemental force."

Further progress of Myaskovsky the symphonist was uneven and complicated. The post-Beethoven epoch knows no other prominent master in this genre with so great a number of symphonies to his credit. As a rule, works of this monumental genre were rare events appearing as a result of long deliberations, searchings, and experimenting in the sphere of shorter forms. Myaskovsky's method was different. His searchings for a new style and new ideas, his fight for the triumph of an art reflecting present-day reality, which he waged for decades, instantly found expression in his large-scale symphonic compositions. This determined the complexity of his career, his waverings between the extremes of introversion, of an acutely subjective, gloomy and tragic perception of the world (the Tenth Symphony, 1927, the Thirteenth Symphony, 1933) and his naive attempts at reflecting present-day reality through employing programmes based on transient events of topical interest (the Twelfth Symphony, 1932, in some measure the Sixteenth, 1936). The third movement of the Sixteenth Symphony, for instance, was written under the impression of the crash of the giant airliner *Maxim Gorky*, a catastrophe that had a wide resonance in its time but is quite forgotten by now. Still, the modern subject-matter had a favourable influence on the idiom of this symphony and today its music attracts the listener, although the theme has lost its significance.

The best qualities of Myaskovsky's talent are most patently manifest in his masterpieces, the Twenty-First and Twenty-Seventh symphonies. In them he has been able to overcome his cheerless subjectiv-

ism and to find deeply-rooted inner ties with reality rather than external, programme ones and adequate means for expressing the Soviet people's spiritual world, their life's philosophy.

The single-movement Twenty-First Symphony is one of the best known and finest of Myaskovsky's compositions. It is a serene lyrical poem dedicated to the composer's native country, to a world of bright and sincere human emotions, and the noble image of the modest hero of our time. Soviet audiences gave the symphony a very warm reception, and the critics acclaimed it as one of the best symphonic works of the pre-war period.

The symphonies composed in the forties also contain many an appealingly lyrical page, particularly the Twenty-Fourth and the Twenty-Fifth. However, Myaskovsky's Twenty-Seventh Symphony, his swan song, proved his most important contribution to Soviet music.

Although a very sick man, the composer worked on this immense score with great enthusiasm and unfailing application. The first sketches for the symphony were done in September 1949 and already on February 22, 1950 Myaskovsky completed its orchestration. Six weeks later he underwent an operation (gastric cancer) which showed his case to be hopeless. He spent the spring and early summer in his country house at Nikolina Gora, where many musicians, composers and his conservatoire pupils came to visit him; in July his sisters brought Myaskovsky to Moscow where he died on August 8, 1950.

The Twenty-Seventh Symphony was first performed after its author's death, in the Hall of Columns in Moscow on December 9, 1950 under the baton of Alexander Gauk, and was enthusiastically acclaimed by professional musicians and the public. In later years the critics proclaimed this symphony, Shostakovich's Tenth and Eleventh and Prokofiev's Seventh to be the most important works of post-war Soviet symphonism.

What strikes one most in that work of a dying great master is its optimism. A lyrico-psychological work dealing with the eternal theme of life and death, the summing-up of a wise and experienced Soviet artist, the symphony is free from darkness and despair. Its optimism, however, is attained through battle, through the overcoming of the threatening and tragic element.

The introductory *Adagio* creates the mood of grim death-like immobility. The theme stated by the bassoon in a low register is austere and ominous. The cellos and basses throb agitatedly. Then the tragic

theme is transformed, becoming the main theme of the *Allegro animato*, restless, agitated, daring and aspiring.

The lyrical themes of the first movement—the poetic landscape description (solo clarinet) and the stirring song of the English horn, later becoming a duet when the oboe joins in—provide a contrast to the driving intensity of the first theme. Moreover, these definitely Russian melodies sing (which is very characteristic of Myaskovsky's later compositions) the beauty of the Russian landscape, the love of a Russian for his native country. This love is the source on which the artist draws for fresh strength. The subsequent intensely dramatic development of these main images presents them in incessant growth and movement. The main theme becomes increasingly more active, revealing its immense volitional force in the central culmination immediately preceding the recapitulation. The secondary theme, too, in the course of the development is transformed into a manful, passionately life-asserting image. In this way the composer unfolds the leading psychological idea of the first movement of his symphony—the triumph of life over death.

The second movement, *Adagio*, forcefully reiterates the acute conflict of these irreconcilable forces. We hear doleful funeral chords in the brass and an exalted and sad melody in the violins, an ominous call of the horns (a kind of *memento mori*) and a broadly developed lyrical theme, a hymn to the beauty and romance of life. The theme of the finale is a triumphant and jubilant procession of millions with the motifs of the Russian song "Glory," which, growing and expanding, spreads to the whole orchestra. The idea is clear and presented with eloquent and noble laconism: in his last symphony the composer sang immortal glory to the Russian people.

The drive forward into the future, and the undaunted optimism of the symphony distinguish it from the others, making it a testament, as it were, left by a great and wise master to his successors.

The creative road of Myaskovsky, abounding in hard, often painful, searchings and vacillations, was the road of an honest Russian intellectual, brought up under entirely different conditions, to acceptance and understanding of present-day reality, to an allegiance, sincere and disinterested, to Soviet society, to his people. Myaskovsky's best works are preserved in the treasury of Soviet art.

* * *

Symphony does not occupy the leading place among the greatly varied works of Sergei Prokofiev, one of the greatest composers of our time. He was more attracted by the stage and the screen than either Shostakovich or Myaskovsky. His talent leaned more towards the picturesque, the colourful and theatrical than towards abstractly philosophical music. Nevertheless, Prokofiev has enriched Russian symphonic music with many a truly original work.

"From his earliest years Prokofiev has been able to 'discover new lands,' to find new shades in assessing phenomena, the possibilities of which one would think exhausted, because Prokofiev's interest in anything where there is life cannot be exhausted." This peculiarity, so well noted by Academician Boris Asafyev, was already manifest in Prokofiev's First Symphony, bubbling with youthful spirits, which he consciously composed in the style of Haydn.

"It seemed to me that had Haydn lived to our day he would have retained his own style while accepting something of the new at the same time," Prokofiev wrote later. "That was the kind of symphony I wanted to write: a symphony in the classical style. And when I saw that my idea was beginning to work, I called it the *Classical Symphony*: in the first place because that was simple, and secondly, for the fun of it, to 'tease the geese,' and in the secret hope that I would prove to be right if the symphony really did turn out to be a piece of classical music."

The symphony actually proved a "piece of classical music" and became a fixture in the repertoire much earlier than any of Prokofiev's other compositions. The work of a 26-year-old composer, this gay, witty and life-asserting symphony was written, strictly speaking, before the October Revolution (in the summer of 1917), but we must speak of it here if only for the reason that it constituted an important landmark in Prokofiev's career.

The *Classical Symphony* is cast in the traditional pre-Beethoven four-movement cycle form: *Allegro*, *Larghetto*, *Gavotte* and finale, *Molto vivace*. The structure of its themes, too, is in accord with the classical tradition—running scales and arpeggios, an abundance of graces such as *appoggiaturas* and shakes, octave leaps, the abrupt contrasts of *piano* and *forte*, of solo parts in the orchestra and resonant *tutti*. But the traditional melodic motifs are spiced with unexpected colourful, typically Prokofievian modulations and harmonic sequences, or are sometimes treated ironically (for instance, the secondary theme of the *Allegro*).

Some pages of the symphony give a foreglimpse of Prokofiev's later works, which is particularly noticeable to the listener in our time. It is clear that many episodes in *Romeo and Juliet*, as well as the dances at the ball in *Cinderella* could not have been written but for the experience gained in composing the *Classical Symphony*. The music of the symphony's most characteristic and popular part—the spirited and witty *Gavotte* (a favourite dance of Prokofiev's) was once more utilized in the "Ball at the Capulets" scene in *Romeo and Juliet*.

Prokofiev was not only able to perceive anew the old symphony traditions, but to fathom the vital and unperishable source that gave them rise, that is, a fresh and clear outlook on the contemporary world.

The first performance of the *Classical Symphony* was given on April 21, 1918 in revolutionary Petrograd. At the concert Prokofiev met Anatoly Lunacharsky, the first Soviet Minister of Public Education.

"Lunacharsky was present. He had his office at the Winter Palace at that time. Alexander Benois was then repairing the damage done to the palace by shell fire from the *Aurora*. Gorky, too, often came there on business. They both introduced me to Lunacharsky. 'I have been working rather hard,' I told him, 'and I would like to get a breath of fresh air.' 'Don't you think we have enough fresh air here now?' 'Yes, but I would like the physical air of seas and oceans.' Lunacharsky thought it over for a few minutes, and then said gaily: 'You are a revolutionary in music, we are revolutionaries in life. We ought to work together. But if you want to go to America I shall not stand in your way.' Thus I missed my chance of becoming part of the life of the new Russia at its very birth. I received a passport for foreign travel and an accompanying document to the effect that I was going abroad on an art mission and to improve my health. There was no indication as to the length of my stay. In vain did one wise friend warn me. 'You are running away from history and history will never forgive you: when you return you will not be understood.' I paid no heed to these words and on May 7, 1918 I set out on my journey."

Another factor contributing to the importance of Prokofiev's *Classical Symphony* lies in its being (together with his First Violin Concerto and Third Piano Concerto) the first peak in the composer's uneven career. Though not the highest if his work is viewed in all its entirety, this peak is nevertheless quite significant. By the time the symphony was written Prokofiev was the author of a number of symphonic works (the *Scythian Suite*, the symphonic poems *Dreams* and

the *Autumnal Sketch* and Sinfonietta in two versions) and two piano concertos, the last two compositions preserving their artistic value to this day.

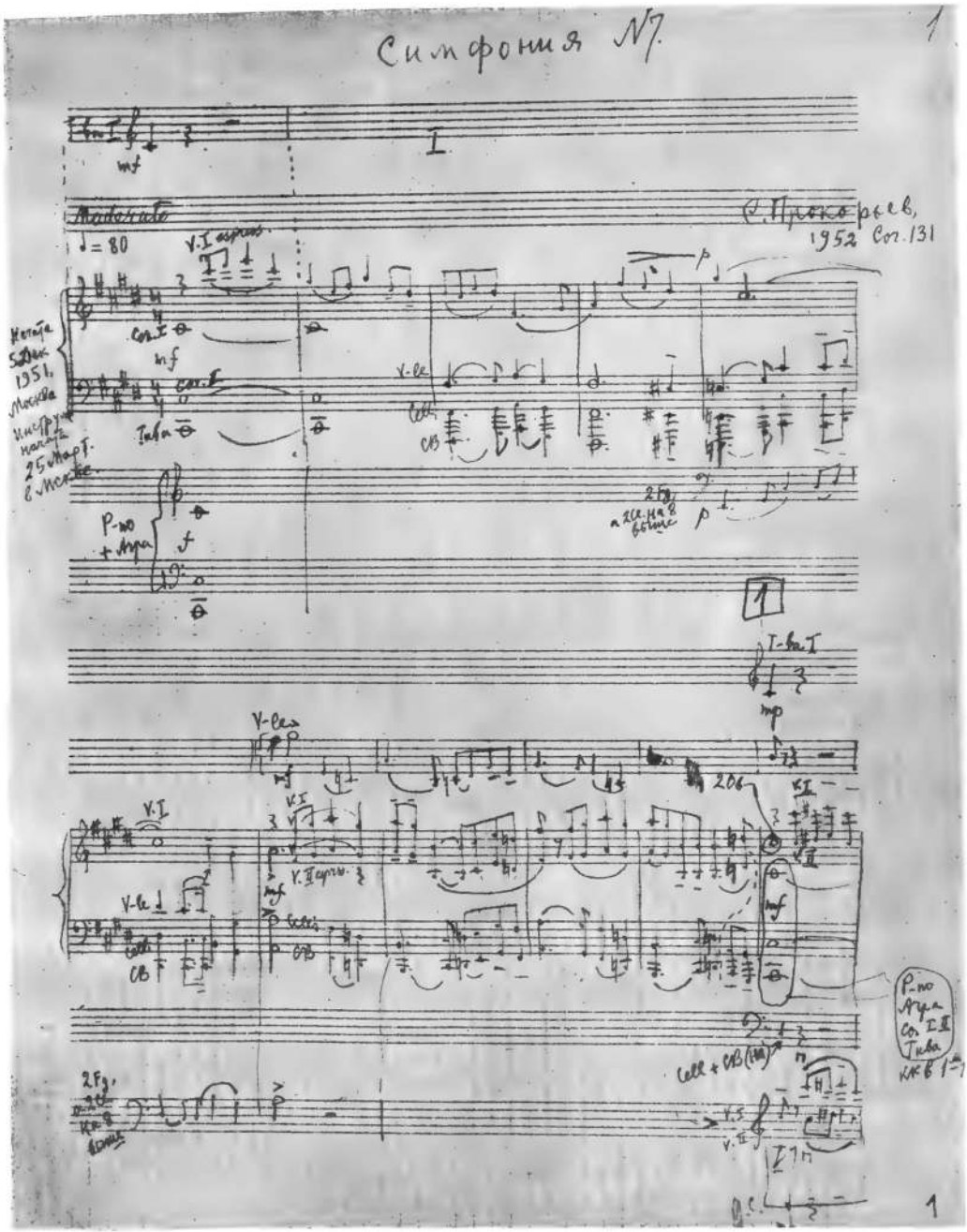
The First Piano Concerto which Prokofiev performed in 1912 aroused a storm of enthusiasm—or indignation—depending on the public's and critics' tastes. Today this life-asserting, dynamic work with typically Prokofievian alternation of resilient dance themes (the introduction and the main theme) and crystal-clear lyricism (the middle episode) has gained wide popularity.

The Second Piano Concerto (1913) differs greatly from the First in that instead of the daring energy breaking all bounds one senses an impetuous high-strung emotionality which, according to Asafyev's definition, depicted the stifling atmosphere preceding the coming storm of war and revolution.

Prokofiev's First Violin Concerto (1917) is an undeniably novel work, its novelty lying in the lavish use of the violin's resources and its unusual form—two lyrical movements with an ironical *scherzo* in between. At the same time it is simpler and more human than his earlier piano concertos. The world's best violinists, including Joseph Szigeti and David Oistrakh, have established the concerto as a truly classical work.

For his Third Piano Concerto completed in France in the summer of 1921, Prokofiev used themes which he had noted down in Russia (1913-18). This remarkable work is written in a natural Russian idiom. Its national character is clear from the opening bars when a solo clarinet "sings" an unpretentious melody resembling a shepherd's lay which brings to mind the spacious Russian countryside. Then follows a dynamic *Allegro* built up on contrasts throughout: the driving and forceful main theme is followed by a whimsical and bizarre secondary theme making one think of Russian fairy-tale personages; the broad and sweeping theme of the introduction in the development section and the weird secondary in the recapitulation, suggest an image truly "supernatural." In the middle episode of the *Andantino* the most beautiful lyrical theme is transformed in a series of grotesque and fantastic variations, astonishing in their inventiveness. The mighty and broad finale in the Borodin manner, its energy untrammelled (with an intensely passionate melody in the middle episode) is filled with joy and faith in happiness.

This excellent composition conceived at home, thrived on the life-

Sergei Prokofiev

First page of the MS. score of Prokofiev's Seventh Symphony

giving juices of Prokofiev's native soil. During the subsequent decade of his stay abroad (1922-32), however, the composer gradually began to lose the feeling of roots and a firm ground to stand on. His symphonies and piano concertos of that period showed with increasing clearness that he was heading for a creative crisis.

The two scores that came after the cold, harsh and abstract Second Symphony (Paris, 1924) were actually a rehash of his incidental music for the theatre. The Third Symphony was written on the themes of the opera *The Flaming Angel* (Paris, 1928) and the Fourth—on those of the ballet *The Prodigal Son* (Boston, 1930). In 1947 Prokofiev revised his Fourth Symphony, which was performed under the baton of Gennady Rozhdestvensky in Moscow during the 1956-57 season.

Comparison of this symphony with later creations of Prokofiev's genius, the "peaks" in his work, shows that it is rather an approach to those "peaks" than an achievement in itself. The dance themes from *The Prodigal Son* undoubtedly contain some seeds of the musical imagery of *Romeo and Juliet* and *Cinderella* but they lack the crystal clearness and brilliance of the later works; they seem like a series of rather vague sketches for a well-known first-rate picture.

The best in the symphony is the third movement *Moderato quasi Andantino*, based on the whimsical and entrancing dance theme of *The Beauty*. The lyrical themes in the first and second movements are characteristically transparent, modest and reserved. The least happy is the finale with its quick succession of variegated and heterogeneous episodes of purely illustrative music, not unified by a single idea.

The instrumental concertos written at the close of Prokofiev's stay abroad (the Fourth and, partly, Fifth piano concertos and the First Cello Concerto) show certain traces of the imminent crisis. All of these scores are too complex, with rare glimpses of Prokofiev's live and chaste lyricism here and there (for instance, the secondary theme of the first movement, the gavotte-like theme of the second movement and the theme of the fourth movement resembling a lullaby—all in the Fifth Piano Concerto).

Prokofiev's next instrumental concerto—his Second Violin Concerto (1935)—belongs to the Soviet period, the most fruitful and mature, and is a masterpiece of Soviet art.

The differences between the two violin concertos divided by a span of nearly twenty years are very significant. The Second Violin Concerto has a more profound idea and its idiom is more strict and lucid. The

First was composed in a period of youthful revolt and a desire to startle, the Second—in one of wise maturity; suffice it to mention that the Second is a contemporary of *Romeo and Juliet*.

The new features of the Second Violin Concerto are its pronouncedly national Russian character (particularly in the main theme of the first movement), its more apparent ties with musical classicism, and the wise calm, the feeling of blissful communion with nature prevailing in the second movement. And it is only in the resilient dance rhythms of the finale that Prokofiev's fiery temperament, held in check for such a long time, breaks out in all its force.

The concerto was first performed in Madrid on December 1, 1935 by Robert Soëtans with the composer on the podium. Later on it found enthusiastic admirers in Jascha Heifetz and David Oistrakh.

It should be noted that on settling finally in the Soviet Union in the mid-thirties Prokofiev did a great deal to re-establish his lost ties with Soviet musical practice. He wrote incidental music for the theatre and the cinema, popular and children's songs, a collection of piano pieces for children entitled *A Summer's Day*, and arranged Russian folk tunes (collection of songs, *Russian Overture*, 1936).

Among his music for children of that period the most appealing is the enchanting symphonic fairy-tale *Peter and the Wolf* (1936) for orchestra and narrator with the text by the composer. Prokofiev uses this humorous piece to give children an object lesson in instrumentation: each instrument is assigned a part in the tale in accordance with its expressive potentialities. The boy Peter is represented by a string quartet, the bird—by the flute, the grumbling grandfather—by the bassoon, the cat—by the clarinet, the quacking of the duck by the oboe in a low register, the growling of the wolf by the "ravenous" chords in muted horns, and so on.

There is much humour and child-like simplicity in the development of the plot. Academician Asafyev wrote about it with enthusiasm: "Everything in it, every detail of the behaviour of the boy, the duck, the bird, the cat and the wolf is so represented by the music as if it were happening for the first time in the world."

It should be borne in mind that, unlike Shostakovich and Myaskovsky, Prokofiev made his most important contribution to Soviet symphonic music not in the genre of lyrico-psychological symphony. Concerto is more typical of Prokofiev, while in the field of pure symphony his work falls into two distinct categories. One is lyrico-genre sym-

phonism in which portrayals of the experiences of children and youth prevail. The young human being with whose eyes Prokofiev sees the world in these compositions has an exceptionally clear, bright and colourful perception of the surrounding phenomena; this young being is chaste and timid in lyrical moments, has a rich imagination, a strong belief in fairy-tale and can plunge into a game to the oblivion of everything else. These qualities, tempered by the wise and ironic smile of the composer, typify the first category of Prokofiev's symphonies, dating back to the *Classical Symphony* and reappearing in the Soviet period in *Peter and the Wolf*, his children's suites and finally, much enriched, in his Seventh Symphony.

The other category is associated with the epic element which manifested itself with especial force in Prokofiev's works belonging to the period of efflorescence. These "Borodin" traits—might, broad sweep, a certain undefinable Russian feeling of the soil—were already in evidence in his early works, beginning with the *Scythian Suite*. In the thirties and forties this folk and epic quality reappeared at first in works of a national-patriotic nature, such as the *Alexander Nevsky* cantata, the opera *War and Peace* and music to the film *Ivan the Terrible*, and later, parallel with other traits, in the Fifth and Sixth symphonies, the First Violin Sonata and the Second Cello Concerto.

What a chasm lies between the conventionally-dramatic Fourth Symphony and the grandiose Fifth with its truly folk music! It was written when the Great Patriotic War was nearing its end, when the whole Soviet country was experiencing a mighty surge of patriotic feelings.

Prokofiev said: "In the summer of 1944 I wrote my Fifth Symphony.... It was intended as a hymn to free and happy man, to his mighty power, his pure and noble spirit."

If we draw a parallel between Prokofiev's response to the heroism of the Soviet people in time of war and Shostakovich's "war" symphonies—the Seventh and Eighth—the difference between their artistic personalities will stand out all the more clearly.

The most important thing for Shostakovich was to be present in the thick of the events described, to experience, as it were, the horror of the fierce battle, and, emerging from it, to appreciate anew the beauty of life. He takes his place at the firing line, among fire and filth, side by side with his heroes, *his contemporaries, plain men, in no way different from the crowd*; this artistic principle comes down from Chaikovsky.

But to Prokofiev, in his Fifth Symphony, the war events appear as at a long historical perspective. His hero is *great, glorious and immortal,* he is a collective personality, the personification of the whole people. He lives in freedom and spaciousness, rejoices in the sun, breathes in the fresh air and sings his heroic song. If he is in a lyrical mood, he is modest, almost childishly naive; if he is sad, it is not for long. But in merriment he knows no bounds: he rejoices with all his big, healthy and pure heart. This hero is a descendant of Borodin's Second (*Bogatyr*) Symphony.

We have here two sharply different artistic personalities and two sharply different perceptions of the world. And yet each was perfectly justified in dealing with those aspects of reality which were closest to him and in depicting them in a way determined by his own artistic outlook. Shostakovich was incapable of singing a hymn to joy and life while guns were booming, but Prokofiev did it, and with a perfect right, too, because he spoke of timeless values.

The music of Prokofiev's Fifth Symphony is related to the epic episodes of the opera *War and Peace* and the films *Alexander Nevsky* and *Ivan the Terrible.* Its contemplative and lyrical pages recall similar scenes from *War and Peace* and *Semyon Kotko.* The symphony captivates the listener with its wealth of melodies and its intimate inner ties with the symphonies of Borodin and Glazunov, its historical predecessors.

The first movement, *Andante,* begins calmly and unhurriedly. The main subject is stated impressively, if somewhat ponderously: as it unfolds, this concentrated theme becomes surrounded by expressive and melodious collateral parts. The fascinating typically Russian secondary theme is broad and free-flowing. A short but colourful development, full of unexpected turns, leads to a still grander, *bogatyr* recapitulation of the two themes; they sound particularly majestic in the mighty coda—a veritable paean to the greatness of the human spirit.

The brilliant *Scherzo* (second movement), keen and agitated, throbs with anxiously pulsating rhythms. Elements of dramatism appear for an instant in its middle episode, the dark colours become even gloomier, but this is soon swept away by the general whirl, and a naive pastoral episode ensues. The ghostly ominous dance is heard again in the recapitulation, but again the catchy humorous theme of the *Scherzo* hurries to dispel the dark mood.

The penetrating songful *Adagio* (third movement) is manly and

calmly contemplative. Sad thoughts about death appear in the middle episode, but not for long. The finale opens with the epic theme from the first movement, followed by a cascade of ringing and scintillating dance tunes.

The symphony was first performed in Moscow on January 13, 1945 under the composer's baton; this was Prokofiev's last public appearance. In June of that year Yevgeny Mravinsky conducted its Leningrad *première* and in the autumn Sergei Koussevitsky performed it in Paris and New York.

The idea of the Sixth Symphony came to Prokofiev immediately after the Fifth, but he completed it only in 1947. The Sixth, too, reflected war events, although in another aspect. The emotions experienced during those tragic years gave birth to the mournful episode, *Lugubre*, in the first movement, as well as the dramatic and "menacing" episodes in the second and third movements. The life-asserting dance of the finale, *Vivace*, also closes with the unexpectedly intruding evil forces of war and the echoes of the march.

But along with these poignantly expressive pages, the symphony has episodes of beautiful lyricism, bright images of life and nature, as well as humorous and jubilant themes. Here the epical side of Prokofiev's genius comes into collision with the lyrico-tragic idea of the work, and hence the excessive length and a certain complexity of some episodes. However, taken as a whole, the Sixth Symphony is a highly impressive and profound composition, definitely national in idiom. Its first performance on October 11, 1947, in Leningrad under Yevgeny Mravinsky, ensured the symphony a great and lasting success.

Besides his Fifth Symphony, Prokofiev's epical genius revealed itself in full in his Second Cello Concerto (its full title is Symphony-Concerto for Violoncello and Orchestra) completed early in 1952.

The Russian colouring of the soulful and poetic melodies in the lyrico-dramatic first movement, *Andante*, and especially of the two chief themes of the *Scherzo* (second movement) is set off by the contrasting "grotesque" and purely dramatic episodes (for instance, the *più animato* in the development of the *Scherzo*). The finale with two themes varied in a very original manner is one more example of Prokofiev's inexhaustible humour, of his boundless love of life and joy of living.

Mstislav Rostropovich gave the *première* of this concerto in Moscow on February 18, 1952, with an orchestra conducted by Svyatoslav Rich-

ter. Several years later, after Prokofiev's death, Rostropovich scored immense success playing the Concerto in America and Western Europe.

Prokofiev's last symphony, the Seventh, closes the long series of his works dealing with children and young people, or perhaps, with the world as seen by children.

The beautiful bright themes of the first movement, *Moderato*, sing of youth and happiness. There are no dramatic contrasts, no struggle, nothing that might dim the bright world as it appears to a child. A calm and dreamy songful main theme is followed by a broad, clear and harmonious secondary (one of the best Russian melodies by Prokofiev, to be compared only with a few themes from *War and Peace* and *The Tale of the Stone Flower*). This theme experesses the leading idea of the symphony. Next comes a fantastic, almost wraith-like, melody in the oboe, punctuated by tinkling bells like the twinkling of stars.

The second movement is a joyful waltz, filled with a pure and sweet delight in life, a sparkling poem of youth and sunshine. The unclouded lyricism and child-like humour of the third movement, *Andante*, are followed by a *Scherzo*-finale. It is like a fascinating children's game, full of good-natured fun, jokes and unrestrained, bubbling high spirits. At the close of the symphony comes an enchanting, youthfully romantic broad melody presented freely and without restraint, which the listener recognizes as the secondary theme from the first movement.

Prokofiev lived to witness the triumph of his symphony: it was performed in Moscow on October 11, 1952 under Samuil Samosud. The composer was in the auditorium. The symphony was a tremendous success when it was heard at a plenary meeting of the Union of Composers' Board at the beginning of February, 1953—a month before Prokofiev's death. Then followed an uninterrupted series of world triumphs. In 1957 Prokofiev's Seventh Symphony was the first musical work in the U.S.S.R. to receive the highest token of recognition—a Lenin Prize.

The progress of Prokofiev the symphonist was from daring challenge to lucid classicism, from grotesque whimsies to a wise acceptance and glorification of life.

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Russian music which has made the most important contribution towards multinational Soviet symphonism is by no means limited to the work of the three great masters we have spoken of at length—Shosta-

kovich, Myaskovsky and Prokofiev. Other composers have written quite a few talented compositions in the genre of symphonic music. They have considerable artistic value and are known today not only in the Soviet Union but abroad as well.

Dmitry Kabalevsky's name should be mentioned first. Although this wise and sensitive artist's standing in Soviet music is determined mainly by his vocal compositions (operas, operettas, cantatas, songs), he also has some symphonic works to his credit. True, out of his four symphonies, only the lyrical Second (1934) is performed on the concert stage, but his works for solo instruments and orchestra are extremely popular. The compositions in question are his three "youth" concertos: the Violin (1948), the Cello (1949) and the Third Piano Concerto (1952), united by a single idea. These concertos not only *speak* about youth but they are *meant* for young musicians—conservatoire students and even pupils of music schools. The Violin Concerto enjoys the greatest fame and is readily played by adult violinists as well.

Kabalevsky wrote this triad of youth concertos after many years of work in the field of music for children—instructive piano pieces and songs. His works in this genre are distinguished by a peculiar clarity and freshness, humour and optimism.

The first movement of the Violin Concerto, *Allegro molto e con brio*, and especially the finale, *Vivace giocoso*, sparkle with carefree laughter, exuberant high spirits and playful fun. There is much in common here with Kabalevsky's Young Pioneer songs.

The second movement, *Andante cantabile*, brings the romance of first love, shy and pure. The melody is captivating. It is one of the most inspired pages to come from under Kabalevsky's pen.

The Cello Concerto strikes a different note: it is in the nature of an elegy. Instead of gay vivacity and youthful ardour it is filled with deep and sad musings, it is a reminder of those who laid down their young lives for their country. The theme of the mournfully meditative *Largo* (second movement) is very expressive.

The bright, "springtime" Piano Concerto is closely related to the Violin Concerto, although the subject-matter of the former is somewhat broader than just scenes from the life of Young Pioneers: the manful march rhythms and processions in the first movement and in the middle episode of the finale suggest youth festivals. At the same time the spirit of jolly children's games, a feeling of happiness and life's fulness play a very prominent part in it. Gracefully and cleverly,

the composer introduces into the second movement the theme of his song "Our Land," one of the favourites with Soviet school children.

A highly characteristic feature of Kabalevsky's artistic personality has found reflection in his "youth" concertos, that is, his interest in Soviet youth and the moods associated with it: joyousness, humour, and warm and youthful lyricism. Kabalevsky has revealed other, more profound aspects of his talent, in the opera genre.

Reinhold Glière who belonged to the first generation of Soviet composers, wrote his monumental symphonies in pre-revolutionary years; they have left no noticeable trace in our music world, although his Third Symphony *Ilya Muromets* was fairly popular in its time. The venerable composer wrote a great deal of excellent music in various genres—opera, ballet, romance, piano and chamber music—but none of his works have enjoyed such popularity as the attractive Concerto for Voice and Orchestra (1943). In it the voice (coloratura soprano) is treated as an instrument, a kind of pure-toned and expressive flute, performing its part without words.

"The sadness of separation and the joy of reunion is how one is tempted to define the two parts of this composition, so truthfully portraying these simple but always stirring human emotions," wrote Kabalevsky about the concerto. Its lyrical and contemplative first movement follows the pattern of a sonatina built up on the juxtaposition of two broad, songful melodies and "airy" passages to set off the emotional quality of the two themes. The second movement is a brilliant fast waltz with alternating episodes of pure melody and animated virtuoso technique.

Lev Knipper, the author of fourteen symphonies, owes his fame not so much to this genre as to that of the programme suite based on folk-lore melodies. To this genre belong his suites *Soldiers' Songs* (1948) and *Albanian Sketches* (1954), in both of which the folk-lore material is treated with great elegance and a true feeling of style. The best known among Knipper's symphonies is his Fourth (1934), the choral episode from which—"Meadowland" ("Polyushko")—has become very popular.

Nikolai Peiko is a talented representative of the middle generation. He has to his credit three symphonies, a piano concerto, a suite on Russian themes and the *Moldavian Suite* (1950).

In the last-named work the composer has shown a fine understanding of the nature and peculiarities of Moldavian folk music. He develops

the folk-lore material in a variety of ways creating a vivid picture of Moldavia's beautiful scenery and its gay, industrious people, and acquainting his listeners with Moldavian drawn-out songs and fiery dances whose fame has spread far beyond the Bessarabian steppes.

Solemn and impressive, the first movement based on themes of wedding songs introduces the whole suite. In the frisky second movement—"Fast Dance"—the composer uses the melody of a gay and perky dance, "Zhok." In contrast to it comes the graceful "Slow Dance" with a manful and energetic middle episode. The fourth movement is a touching "Doina," a characteristic genre of improvisatory lyrical song. Then comes the boisterous finale in which the themes of the "Moldavenyaska" dance and of two other folk melodies are presented in a series of brilliant variations.

Peiko's most important symphony—the Third (1957)—in which he emerges as a talented artist and profound thinker, continues the lyrico-psychological line in Soviet symphonism, the line of Myaskovsky and, to a certain extent, Shostakovich.

To quote the Soviet musicologist Daniel Zhitomirsky, "The Third Symphony by Nikolai Peiko has no programme subtitles and yet its dramatic content is clearly defined. The first and third movements seem to glow with the lurid flame of battle. An evil, stubborn and driving force, causing pain and dismay, is combined here with an unyielding will to resistance, headstrong courage and, inseparable from the two—people's optimism. In the second movement the heart reigns supreme, it is the realm of wondrous stirring lyricism.

"The finale is the symphony's high spot. The sound of the march has faded away in the distance and the gloom seems dispersed, the skies are high and blue, with here and there a transparent fleecy cloud pierced through by the sun.

"A melody of a broad song is wafted from those heights: perhaps it is the singing of birds? Should we call this a haven of rest, an idyll? Yes and no! Even in the music depicting the serene landscape one senses the secret throbbing of a disquieting rhythm, of disquieting unresolved harmonies.... In happiness and ecstasy there is an underlying hint of sorrow and anxiety, anxiety for people's destinies, for their life, because leaden clouds are apt to threaten beauty, whereas in sorrow and anxiety one sees a wavering ray of hope, and senses the presence of inexhaustible, ever-young life."

Among the compositions of recent years the single-movement sym-

phony-legend *In Memory of Zoya Kosmodemyanskaya* is worthy of note. It is the work of Myaskovsky's pupil Sergei Razoryonov, a fine and thoughtful artist.

Razoryonov is the author of the *Rhapsody on Slavonic Themes* and a violin concerto. He completed his symphony-legend in 1953, and it has since been in the repertoire of many orchestras.

The transparent, gentle and sad chords opening (and closing) the symphony-legend may be interpreted as depicting the exalted, tender and poetic image of the heroine; the second theme, turbulent and dramatic, is like an impassioned funeral oration, sincere in its emotion. Then come bright episodes describing Zoya's childhood and youth. Suddenly the ominous sounds of war are heard. Two genuine folk themes are used in the tensely dramatic development: one of them, a song which Zoya's fellow-soldiers used to sing and the other—the melody of a song about Civil War partisans which, the heroine's mother told the composer, was Zoya's favourite. The latter song is used in the funeral procession following the dramatic episode of Zoya's death. The recapitulation brings with it scenes of peaceful life and the coda once more recalls the gentle image of the girl who gave up her life for her country.

Symphonic works of Vissarion Shebalin, a highly cultured artist with a fine taste, are also worth mentioning. His creative output includes four symphonies, the dramatic symphony *Lenin* (to V. Mayakovsky's poem of the same title) for soli, chorus and orchestra (1931), a violin concerto (1940) and a sinfonietta on Russian folk themes (1949).

Gavriil Popov has made a certain contribution to Russian symphonic music with his four symphonies. His second symphony, *Motherland* (1943), has become a staple item of the orchestral repertoire.

Nikolai Rakov is the author of suites on folk themes, pieces for brass band and Russian folk instruments orchestra, a symphony (1940) and two violin concertos written in 1944 and 1954 respectively.

Moisei Weinberg, a talented and highly accomplished symphonist of the middle generation, is the author of the well-known *Moldavian Rhapsody* for violin and orchestra (1951), three symphonies and several orchestral pieces on folk themes.

Boris Klyuzner's Violin Concerto (1949-50), written in the Shostakovich tradition, is a piece with a significant message. The composer's other symphonic works are three concert overtures, a piano concerto, waltz for violin and strings, and works in a lighter vein.

* * *

In conditions of socialism the peoples inhabiting the Soviet Union have grown and developed spiritually as never before. The universal spread of musical education has resulted in the upsurge of musical culture generally and in the appearance of professional composers where there used to be only oral tradition and improvisation on folk musical instruments. In the case of the peoples whose social consciousness and professional musical culture already began to take shape in the second half of the 19th century (this applies chiefly to the Transcaucasus—Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan) the strides in musical creativeness made in Soviet times have been so great that the fame of some of their composers has spread not only beyond the borders of their own republics, but even beyond the Soviet Union as a whole.

The Armenian, Georgian and Azerbaijan symphonic schools are intimately connected with progressive Russian musical culture. The masterpieces of Russian and West-European music and the creative principles of Russian classics and progressive foreign masters of modern times are closely studied. Transcaucasian composers also attend the conservatoires of Moscow and Leningrad. Some of them have been the pupils of leading Soviet symphonists, such as Myaskovsky and Shostakovich. Their work, however, is profoundly national and extremely original.

Aram Khachaturyan's name heads the list of these brilliant, highly original and talented symphonists. His full-blooded music carrying the listener along like a mighty torrent, sings beauty and the joy of life in all its manifestations, variety of colour and aspect. Asafyev aptly called Khachaturyan "the Rubens of our music."

This is what he says: "Khachaturyan's Rubens-like temperament, his gravitation towards the 'sensuous charms of sound texture' inherent in his music make him a herald of true hedonism that has nothing in common with the slack modern civilization, but is deeply rooted in folk-lore."

The composer's original style took shape and developed on the soil of his native Transcaucasian folk art. An Armenian by nationality, Khachaturyan was born in Tbilisi, the capital of Georgia, and spent his childhood there. His parents were uneducated people but very fond of folk music; he began studying music professionally only at the age of nineteen. He assimilated Oriental music—Armenian, Georgian and Azerbaijan—in all its varied forms, its intricate rhythms, its wealth of melodic graces, its fascinatingly original modal and harmonic structure.

Georgy Khubov, the author of a monograph on Khachaturyan, gives the following analysis of the composer's style: "Aram Khachaturyan's music has two types of themes. Type one—relatively short, always concise themes-leitmotifs in which a *characteristic melodic element* is always associated with a *characteristic rhythm.* Such themes are polysemantic and changeable; they can be likened to a compressed spring concentrating great potential energy, demanding further use. Usually they play the role of motive force in symphonic development.

"The themes of type two are quite different: they are broad and songful *melodies* containing a perfectly finished image which demands no further development, because the theme itself is the result of development. Such themes are romantically-agitated and . . . static. While the themes of type one express *motion* in an endless rhythmic space, the themes of type two express *contemplation* and *exuberant feeling* given free rein."

Khachaturyan revealed his creative talent at a comparatively late age, but then its tempestuous development was all the more striking. When he was thirty Khachaturyan graduated from Nikolai Myaskovsky's class of composition at the Moscow Conservatoire and in that same year wrote his First Symphony (1934), a lyrico-epic work in which the characteristic features of a great artist are already apparent, although in a somewhat unripe form. His contemporaries received Khachaturyan's symphony with enthusiasm, welcoming it as a great event. But today it seems to us a first attempt, a "test of the pen" merely hinting at what the "real Khachaturyan" was to be. The appearance of his world-famous Piano Concerto in 1937 marks the birth of this "real Khachaturyan."

Khachaturyan's music was undoubtedly innovatory. His astonishingly original melodies, his harmonies overstepping the boundaries of known sound combinations, his brilliant and vivid colours, complex and pungently expressive rhythms, as well as new "improvisatory" forms—all this made Khachaturyan's music unique. Actually the Piano Concerto is a further development of the classical tradition and also the achievements of progressive twentieth-century art, in particular, the colourful palette of musical impressionism. But it was not this aspect of the composer's style that impressed the listeners in the thirties. The indisputable modernity of his work was what struck both Soviet and foreign audiences in the first place. Khachaturyan was

genius enough to discover in age-old folk music melodic elements in harmony with the emotional world of the people of his time.

Allegro ma non troppo e maestoso, the first movement, is not free from the influences of Chaikovsky's and Rachmaninov's piano style. The nature of the contrast of the musical material—broad and manly images on the one hand (the main theme) and graceful, lyrical song or dance themes, on the other (the secondary theme)—as well as some methods of development are also in the Chaikovsky tradition.

The exquisitely plastic second movement, *Andante*, is Khachaturyan at his best. A short concentrated and meditative introduction with measured undulations in the bass is followed by a light lyrically-exalted melody in the nature of the rhapsodies sung by Armenian folk bards—the *ashugs*. Its majestic calm and clarity of style lend ineffable charm and freshness to this music.

Allegro brillante, the finale, is the concerto's weakest spot. Its fiery and temperamental passages are somewhat superficial in character, but in the lyrical episodes we hear again the impassioned, elementally vast melodies of the "real Khachaturyan." The concerto closes with a resonant affirmation of the majestic main theme from the first movement.

A lover of light and colour, Khachaturyan has imbued his Piano Concerto with youthful ardour and faith in universal beauty. Perhaps it was the breath of youth that aroused the enthusiasm of the mass audiences.

In his next work, *Poem About Stalin* (1938) Khachaturyan presents a skilful combination of the original stylistic media of Armenian, Georgian and Azerbaijan music, while subjecting the logic of the whole to symphonic development: from an improvisatory introduction, through the contrasting imagery of the *Allegro*, to the epilogue—a closing chorus to the words of *ashug* Mirza Bairamov of Tauz. This composition was often performed in the pre-war years and its fascinating melodies made it immensely popular.

His celebrated Violin Concerto (1940), dedicated to David Oistrakh, its first and best performer, brought Khachaturyan world fame. The solo part is extremely difficult and grateful for the violinist. The idiom of the whole composition is thoroughly national, and while conveying a true folk spirit it arouses one's admiration by the ingenuity of the symphonic development and the wealth of scoring.

The first movement, *Allegro con fermezza*, opens with an energetic call in the orchestra. The violin then begins a fast "stamping" tune

providing the background for melodious phrases in the flute and the bassoon. This is actually the main theme, a lively and graceful dance. Its impetuous whirl is alive with inexhaustible energy and joy of life. The lyrical secondary theme creates a world of sunny day-dreams. The poetic melody in the violin stands out tender and languid against a transparent, lulling background of the cellos and a harp, interwoven with the pastoral melodies in the flutes and clarinets. The development with its sudden contrasts, followed by a long virtuoso cadenza of the solo violin, is built up on the juxtaposition of these two themes.

A wonderful harmony of thoughts and emotions, a feeling of life fully enjoyed, a tranquil acceptance of the world—these are the moods of the second movement, *Andante sostenuto*. Its two lyrical songful themes afford a broad scope for the violin cantilena. The beautiful first theme is like a contemplative nocturne, while the somewhat sterner second theme has a touch of intensity.

In the jubilant round dance of the finale, *Allegro vivace*, the element of the dance is let loose; the music is a hymn to sunshine and to human happiness.

Khachaturyan's Second Symphony was given its first performance in the Large Hall of the Moscow Conservatoire under Boris Khaikin's baton on December 30, 1943. This work reveals certain new aspects of the composer's talent. Khachaturyan gave his first presentation of philosophically generalized tragic and heroic images called to life by the Great Patriotic War.

Like Shostakovich's Seventh, Prokofiev's Fifth, Myaskovsky's Twenty-Second and Twenty-Fourth, Mshvelidze's First and Second, Balanchivadze's First and some other contemporary symphonies, Khachaturyan's Second Symphony was a direct response of the artist (made in his own original way) to the grim and stirring events of the war.

The composer nursed the idea of the symphony for two years, but once the whole conception was clear to him it took him less than two months to write the immense score of this work which Georgy Khubov aptly calls the *Bell Symphony*.

The introduction, *Andante maestoso*, preceding the first movement, the tocsin sounded by the whole orchestra, is the "bell motif," the signal of calamity. It is followed immediately by a second motif filled with passionate anxiety. After the introduction comes a sad and stern melody in the violas—the main theme, *Molto tranquillo*. The bell motif

intrudes upon this theme in the course of its development; then an impetuous rhythmic build-up leads to a very original improvisatory secondary theme consisting of two different melodic elements: a lively dance in a sharp rhythm and a sad lyrical theme, the outgrowth of the second motif of the introduction.

An extensive fresco of a development section depicts the heat and rage of a fierce battle. The thematic material of the introduction and the exposition is worked out further: sharp conflicts give rise to new images and new combinations of themes. A touchingly lyrical episode, *Largamento*, very characteristic of Khachaturyan, appears in the development and at first seems a bright oasis among the general turmoil. But the bright mood is dimmed by pain, a sense of loss, and the bitterness of wrecked happiness. The dialogue between this deeply human theme (the melody in muted viclins and violas accompanied by the harps and basses *pizzicato*) and the strained and fitful main theme (bass-clarinet) is profoundly tragic; this episode with the themes treated contrapuntally is one of the most impressive in the symphony.

A long coda in the nature of a development presents the picture of a menacing procession, unswerving in its advance. The tolling of the alarm bell is heard once more.

The second movement, *Allegro risoluto*, is a scintillating *scherzo*. The main theme, a rhythmic outgrowth of the dance tune in the secondary theme of the first movement, rapidly develops, carrying everything away in its unrestrained motion, until this whirlwind becomes an angular and sinister death dance.

Andante con passione, the middle episode, stands apart in the *Scherzo*, with its flowing melody sung by deep-toned cellos, violas and English horn. The infernal dance is let loose again in the recapitulation, but the colours gradually become lighter and by the close of the *Scherzo* the music has lost its demoniac quality.

Unmitigated grief is the mood of the third movement, *Andante sostenuto*. The composer together with the entire people bows his head at the memory of the war victims. Against the grave background of a slowly moving funeral procession a sad melody is unfolded; the height of dramatism is reached here through the combination of an improvisatory, troubled and sobbing Oriental melody and the rhythm of the procession, hopeless in its reiteration. Then against the same funeral march rhythm there appears the tragic theme of the *Dies irae*. It gradually swells and grows, coming nearer, until the two themes are

contrapuntally combined in a tragically majestic and awe-inspiring recapitulation.

Loud fanfares opening the finale, *Allegro sostenuto, maestoso,* come as an answer. Its unhurried and majestic theme resembling an anthem determines the epic and triumphant mood of the finale. In the closing section this theme is intertwined with the austere main theme from the first movement; then comes the bell motif. This time it rings with might and power, the tones of alarm and anxiety are gone.

The Second Symphony was the response of a great and original Soviet artist to the thoughts and feelings shared by the entire nation in the dire years of the war.

Among Khachaturyan's post-war compositions for concert performances mention should be made of his Cello Concerto (1946), a less significant and indisputable work than its piano and violin predecessors, but noteworthy for its wealth of attractive melodies (particularly in the songful second movement). The virtuoso aspect of this concerto lacks the purposefulness and organic unity of the other two works in this genre.

Lately Khachaturyan has been very active as conductor of his own works, among which a prominent place belongs to his Second Symphony and instrumental concertos.

Other talented Armenian composers, besides Aram Khachaturyan, have made their contributions to Soviet symphonic music.

Leon Khoja-Einatov (1904-1954), a pupil of Spendiarov's, spent most of his life in Leningrad but his work was inspired by his native Armenia. The author of three piano concertos, numerous orchestral suites, poems, and five operas, he won fame for his last compositions—Dances for Symphony Orchestra—(in three volumes, 1952) and a symphony which was performed late in 1954, after the composer's death.

The idea behind Khoja-Einatov's Dances is related to that of Slavonic Dances by Dvořák or Norwegian Dances by Grieg. Actually, they are not really dance suites but collections of genre novelettes arranged on the principle of contrasting imagery. At the same time they are uniform in style and definitely Armenian in idiom.

Khoja-Einatov's symphony is a dramatic poem describing the life and deeds of a courageous and noble personality dying in battle for the common cause.

The opening movement depicts the valiant hero; the second speaks of his aspirations and trials. The *Scherzo* (third movement) with a heroic middle episode presents a picture from the life of the people.

Vissarion Shebalin

Dmitry Kabalevsky

Aram Khachaturyan and violinist Igor Oistrakh. 1957

The symphony's focal point is its finale which falls into three sections; the most impressive is the central section—a battle scene in which the hero performs his deed of valour and is killed. A menacing choral of the trombones leads to a calm epilogue—the bright memory of the fallen hero.

Sergei Balasanyan is another successful symphonist; he is the author of "Armenian Rhapsody" (1947), a highly original work, and "Seven Armenian Songs" for orchestra (1956), noted for their elegance and charm. The composer's major works, however, are his operas and ballets in the Tajik national style—the fruit of his many years' work in that republic.

Grigory Yegiazaryan's work is very popular in Armenia. It was his three-movement symphony *Armenia* (1944) that first brought him recognition, which was established with the appearance of his colourful dance suites and especially his symphonic picture "Towards Sunrise" and his Violin Concerto. "Towards Sunrise" was composed in the style of a *saari*, a genre of Armenian improvisatory instrumental music. According to ancient wedding custom these poetic lays were performed by musicians at sunrise next morning. A modern composer with the wealth of orchestral timbers at his command could not, of course, compose a *saari* as it is performed by folk musicians; he utilized the characteristic rhythms and melodic elements of the genre and built upon them a long free poem-rhapsody with a broad improvisatory melody predominating in the first part and colourfully orchestrated dance tunes in the second.

Alexander Arutyunyan's First Symphony, rich in ideas, has attracted notice among the new works recently performed in Armenia. This goes to show that composers of the younger generation have also begun to make worth-while contributions towards the development of symphonic music in their republic.

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The symphonic tradition in Georgia is of comparatively short standing: it has been in existence for not more than fifteen or twenty years. Short though this period of time is, it has produced some talented composers of interesting and original works.

The professional Georgian school of composers took shape under the influence of classical Russian and modern symphonism.

The roots of the national symphonic style are to be sought for in Georgian folk music with its original polyphony, and long part songs resembling cantatas, with their polyphonic development and transformation of the initial melody.

It is to be regretted that the work of Shalva Mshvelidze, an outstanding symphonist and one of the most interesting creative personalities in Soviet music, is little known. And yet his epically grandiose and colourful music with its fresh melodies and harmonies is full of latent primordeal force akin to the majestic beauty of his native Georgia. The son of a peasant, who from infancy breathed in the beauty of folk music as he did the invigorating air of the mountains, Mshvelidze has remained true to this music. He does not quote it in his works, but preserves a spiritual affinity with it. His music contains some elements characteristic of folk music in Pshavia (a mountainous locality in Eastern Georgia): for instance, he uses the archaic "Pshavian" mode (a variation of the Phrygian) to depict images associated with hoary antiquity; he employs the enticing rhythms of fiery West-Georgian dances to create the active, dynamic episodes in his symphonies (even those dealing with the modern theme).

The originality of Mshvelidze's symphonic style manifests itself with particular clarity and forcefulness in his Third Symphony, *Samgori* (1954). The theme itself, dealing with both the past and present of the Georgian people is characteristic of the composer. Samgori is a valley in Georgia with three mounds marking the graves of fallen warriors. In days long past, enemy invasion had laid waste what used to be a flowering spot, and for centuries after it had remained an arid lifeless desert. And not until the Soviet people had constructed the great Samgori Canal by heroic popular endeavour, was the desert brought back to life. The theme of remaking nature, the contrast between the old and new has inspired the composer to write a monumental symphonic work.

The symphony falls into four movements: *Largo* ("The Desert"), *Allegro* ("People Have Come to the Desert"), *Andante* ("Dreams of the Future"), *Allegro con brio* ("Feast of Samgori"). "The Desert," the opening movement, is the richest in content and its music is highly typical of Mshvelidze. Stern chords depict a dismal lifeless plain. The sad recitative-like melody in the clarinet contains the intonations of peasant songs and lamentations, as if a lone wayfarer plodding on in the desert were singing a doleful song about the sad destiny of man

powerless in the face of nature's awesome forces. The music of the *Largo* reaches the height of tragedy in the culmination. The lively and vigorous *Allegro* presents scenes of work. The *Andante* is supremely serene and contemplative. The dance rhythms predominating in the finale sometimes alternate with *scherzo*-like or march episodes. The vivid picture of a popular festivity closes with a triumphant song of victorious labour.

Mshvelidze, author of an epic opera, *The Lay of Tariel* (after Shot'ha Rust'haveli's poem *Knight in the Tiger's Skin*), a monumental oratorio, *The Caucasus*, a number of symphonic pictures and dances, is a master of the programme genre. His two symphonic poems, *Zviadauri* (1940) and *Mindia* (1950) are justly considered the gems of Georgian music. Their subjects are drawn from poems by Vazha Pshavela (1861-1915), a classical Georgian poet who glorified the free life of the Georgian highlanders. The imagery of Pshavela's poems imbued with the spirit of humanism is close to Mshvelidze's heart.

Zviadauri is written after the poem *The Guest and the Host* about Zviadauri, a Khevzur, and Jokola, a Kistin, who have placed friendship above the blood feud raging between their two tribes. The two heroes die and their blood seals the friendship between their peoples.

Zviadauri consists of four movements cast in free improvisatory forms. The introduction describes the rugged mountainous country and the images of the two heroes; the ominous theme in the basses is a reminder of the barbarous laws of blood feud, which will eventually destroy Zviadauri and Jokola. The second movement, "Chonguri" (the name of a Georgian folk instrument), begins as a genre scene built on old Khevzur and Kistin tunes, but gradually it develops into the dramatic scene in which Kistins attack Zviadauri and the two heroes die. The brief third movement, "The Death of Zviadauri," is a heroico-tragic requiem, while the bright finale asserts the idea of the immortality of friendship between nations (it should be noted that the finale is somewhat superficial and has little connection with the subject of the poem).

The *Snake-eater* poem tells of Mindia, a Khevzur, who chanced to taste snake meat, after which he became wise in the ways of Nature, and understood the language of animals and plants. This wonderful gift brought him untold moral sufferings. The poet shows Mindia as an idealist, a noble-minded dreamer who wanted to live without causing pain to any living being. But that proved impossible: in order to provide for his family he had to fell trees and kill animals. His dreams

were shattered by the immutable stern laws of life and, finally, he lost his wonderful gift. Vazha Pshavela's poem ends with Mindia's being killed in the war.

In *Mindia* the composer describes in inspired and colourful music the breath-taking beauties of Nature whose language the hero suddenly begins to understand. Its epic-narrative passages, as well as the touchingly serene conclusion are among the finest in the symphonic poem, while the battle episode (the central part) written in the conventional idiom is the least convincing.

Georgian symphonic music owes a considerable debt to Andrei Balanchivadze, author of two extensive symphonies, three piano concertos and several shorter symphonic pieces.

The First Symphony (1944), written in the years of the Great Patriotic War, is an original reflection of the deep dramatic conflict of the epoch, although it does not deal directly with war events. The music conveys the atmosphere of an impending storm, of dark forebodings. The most interesting feature of the symphony is that its originally bright and joyful theme gradually becomes heroic, and its life-asserting quality and spiritual power triumph over the evil images of darkness.

The best of Balanchivadze's piano concertos is his Third (1952), an appealing and poetic work written about children and for children. Its active first and third movements abound in various march and dance rhythms, depicting lively scenes from the life of school children. The beautiful second movement, according to the composer, is a dialogue between a child and its father (the recitatives of the piano and the curt replies of the cellos) against a background of a serene landscape. In the concluding episode of this movement the youthful "hero"—at last allowed to run and play—is shown frisking about, enjoying the warm spring day. Here the composer introduces the poetic Georgian song "My Greeting to You, Birds," which he develops in the orchestra against the "chirping" passages in the piano, thus closing the slow movement of the concerto.

Among Balanchivadze's works there are a number of programme symphonic pictures, the best of which are *Lake Ritsa* (an intermezzo from his opera *Mziya*) and *The Dnieper*, a symphonic ballade after Gogol (1955).

Alexei Machavariani, a talented Georgian composer, has written few orchestral compositions but they have brought him immediate recognition. His best-known works are Piano Concerto (1944), Symphony

(1947), *On the Death of a Hero*, a symphonic poem (1949) and Violin Concerto (1950).

In the Violin Concerto Machavariani's talent reveals itself to the full. Its typical features are a bright and romantic outlook, vivid temperament, deep dramatism and an original musical idiom intimately connected with national Georgian folk music.

The violin holds indisputable sway over the orchestra in the concerto's first two movements; it is only in the finale that the rest of the instruments are assigned roles of equal importance in the ensemble. Two themes are developed and dramatically counterposed in the first movement, *Allegro*—the first march-like theme is manly and heroic, stemming from the Georgian folk song "Tsar Vakhtang," the second is an inspired lyrical melody sung by the violin to the accompaniment of transparent chords in the strings and the harp (incidentally, this is the melody of Machavariani's best song "Blue Colour"). The lyrical theme dominates over the other one; in the course of development it acquires a dramatic character, determining the exalted and expressive *pathétique* nature of the whole movement.

Andante, the second movement, is an uninterrupted stream of exquisite melodies with the main theme related to the lyrical melody of the opening movement. Here it sounds transparent with a touch of sadness.

The colourful virtuoso finale in the folk spirit is built up on tempestuous, fiery melodies and rhythms, bringing to mind a Georgian folk fête. In addition to its main dance theme the composer skilfully uses the melodic elements and rhythms of popular Georgian folk songs, such as "Erio" and "I Am Sharpening My Sickle." The concerto closes with the vigorous "Tsar Vakhtang" theme from the first movement. A stylistically well-integrated composition, appealing with its fresh and vivid melodies, the concerto is performed with invariable success in the Soviet Union and abroad.

Otar Taktakishvili, the youngest Georgian symphonist of talent, is fruitfully working in the sphere of lyrico-psychological orchestral music. His natural tendencies are to express the innermost human emotions, he is a lyricist in the broad sense of the term. The epic, heroic genre and colourist elements play a subordinate role in his music. Another important feature of Taktakishvili's music, stemming as it does from Georgian folk-lore, is its closeness to the European symphonic school, particularly the symphonic compositions of Chaikovsky—the

greatest achievement in the lyrico-psychological genre. Taktakishvili is the author of two symphonies (written in 1949 and 1953 respectively), a piano concerto (1951) and the symphonic poem *Mtsyri* (1956) after Lermontov.

His Piano Concerto is Taktakishvili's best work. The depth of its ideas, the scope of its imagery and even its form (the concerto has four movements instead of the traditional three) place it on the level of a symphony.

The fast-moving and turbulent first movement is preceded by an introduction the theme of which resembles an imperative call or rhetorical invocation. The first theme stated by the piano to the accompaniment of violins and violas is a fervid and warm melody, at once meditative and agitated, expressive of profound human emotions. Subsequently it gains in dramatism and urgency. The second theme, songful and bright, embellished with typical Oriental graces, is presented first by the piano and then taken up by the strings.

Abruptly, the agitated theme of the introduction rushes in like a reminder of the ever-vigilant menacing forces: it is heard as a sinister rumble in the low strings with bassoons and then in the rolling passages of the piano. This is the beginning of a dramatic conflict. A torrent of piano passages closes the development section. The recurring main theme sounds as an agitated call. The songful secondary theme comes, bright and triumphant, after a virtuoso piano cadenza.

The graceful, playful *Scherzo* is followed by a slow third movement based on a cantilena melody intimately associated with Georgian lyrical songs (the composer himself admitted that it was inspired by a Mingrelian lullaby).

There is reason to believe that the finale of Taktakishvili's concerto was influenced by the finale of Chaikovsky's Fifth Symphony. Like his predecessor, Taktakishvili transforms a menacing and imperative theme into a jubilant one in the major key: the forces of evil have been subjugated by man—such may be the interpretation of the solemn introduction to the finale. Further development, however, proceeds along a different course, the main body of the finale being a succession of lively and imaginative variations on a simple pastoral theme, first stated by the piano.

The content of the Second Symphony is broader than that of the First or of the Piano Concerto. Its subject-matter is not the day-dreams of youth, but tragic experiences, the anguish of bereavement, the

sorrow and struggle of the entire people. In the symphony his style is more dramatic, the contrasts between the movements are more sharply marked. And even though not all of his conceptions find a ready realization (the least satisfactory is the finale, an outwardly showy epilogue and not the logical conclusion, the denouement of the drama), it is quite clear that the young composer's creative scope has become broader, that he is in constant quest of new themes and new expressive media.

The symphonic poem *Mtsyri* marks a step forward: here Taktakishvili's music is more profound and imbued with a deeper psychological content. While his former compositions, particularly symphony finales, contained superficial music, being essentially nothing but showy "happy endings," in the symphonic poem there are no traces of these elements.

The composer has found convincingly dramatic images to express the impassioned struggle of a free spirit against stagnation—the idea of Lermontov's wonderful poem. The two themes characterizing Mtsyri, the hero, are highly expressive and unmistakably Georgian in origin. One of them is slow, plaintive (depicting his suffering and longing), the other is restless and impetuous (describing the youth's flight from the monastery in search of freedom). The slow episodes of the symphonic poem—the introduction and the middle episode—portray the contrasting aspects of life, its poles as it were: on the one hand there is the stagnant, death-like atmosphere of the monastery portrayed by means of static music (long-drawn-out bass chords with bell-like "splashes" in the celesta) and, on the other, the bright pictures of free nature, filled with springtime rustlings and scents, expressed through a lyrical melody imbued with the joy of living. Here the composer first introduces some colourist "pictorial" effects such as the bell, the murmuring of a brook, the rustling of the leaves, prompted, of course, by the programme subject.

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Azerbaijan symphonic music is a recent development, as the ancient musical culture of Azerbaijan which possessed a rich oral tradition (folk musicians and bards from Azerbaijan were famous in all Asia) only adopted European musical forms at a relatively late date. National vocal genres, such as opera, musical comedy and song were first to appear, while symphonic music only began to form in the last ten or

fifteen years. This was the work of a new generation of Azerbaijan composers born after the October Revolution and educated at the conservatoires of Baku and Moscow. In this connection, special mention should be made of Kara Karayev and Jevdet Gajiyev, Shostakovich's pupils at the Moscow Conservatoire, as well as Fikret Amirov, Jangir Jangirov and Sultan Gajibekov, the alumni of the Baku Conservatoire.

Kara Karayev, whose talent seems at its zenith just now, is the most talented of the modern Azerbaijan composers, indeed, one of the best Soviet composers of our day.

In 1944 and 1946 he composed two symphonies, and somewhat earlier, the *Passacaglia* and Tripple Fugue for orchestra. The style of these works, however, was far from individual and only a few happy passages here and there gave promise of a future fine master. Karayev may be said to have found himself only when he turned his attention to folk musical material, which was associated with programme music.

Karayev's symphonic poem *Leili and Mejnun* (1947) on the subject of Nizami's poem, extremely popular in Azerbaijan, was universally acclaimed as his major achievement.

The menacing theme of the introduction foretells the tragic fate awaiting the unfortunate lovers. It develops, gaining in intensity and aggressiveness, to be followed by the restless, turbulent main theme depicting the turmoil of passion raging in the breast of Mejnun crazed with love. It has as its lyrical culmination a free-flowing and very beautiful melody in the violins, expressing the romantic, pure and exalted love of Leili and Mejnun.

After a taut and tempestuous development section where the fatal theme of the introduction breaks in imperiously, destroying the happiness and life of the lovers, the love theme reappears; it is even more passionate, symbolizing as it were the last attempt to capture happiness. However it dies down gradually, passing from the violins to the horn and then to a solo clarinet.

Karayev's score has much in common with Chaikovsky's *Romeo and Juliet*, which is easily accounted for by the closeness of their literary programmes. Yet Karayev's thematic material, as well as the dramaturgic plan, are quite original, presenting his own interpretation of the subject and are in perfect keeping with the national Azerbaijan tradition and the composer's individual style. Karayev's music is characterized by brevity, high expressiveness, a fine sense of dramatic "timing"

Kara Karayev

Left to right: Eugen Kapp and the young composer Eino Tamberg

Yanis Ivanov

Andrei Balanchivadze

which saves the composer from redundancy as well as understatement, and by apt and inventive themes.

Among Karayev's subsequent large-scale compositions, all of which are written for symphony orchestra, the ballets *Seven Beauties* and *The Path of Thunder* are especially noteworthy; the suites from these ballets have become the high lights of the Soviet concert repertoire. His orchestral works other than the ballet suites also have programmes, sometimes connected with non-Azerbaijan folk-lore. Such, for instance, is his *Albanian Rhapsody* (1954) in which the original melodies of Albanian songs and dances are developed symphonically. Colourful music, a wise penetration into the genre and the expressive essence of all the musical images, the skill with which their succession and development are subordinated to the inner logic of the whole—all this has made the *Rhapsody*, a vivid tale about the life of the Albanian people, a tremendous success.

The *Vietnamese Suite* (1955) consisting of a number of pictures, each complete in itself, also follows a general idea—the fight of the people for independence, for a happy future. In the finale a heroic song of Vietnamese partisans has been used.

It is interesting to note that in works dealing with his native Azerbaijan themes Karayev does not quote folk-lore melodies as a rule. At the same time the entire style of his music, the peculiar modes and harmonies, the colourist treatment of the orchestra, the melodies and the manner in which they develop—everything reveals a deep penetration into the musical idiom and thinking of the Azerbaijan people.

Jevdet Gajiyev, the author of four symphonies and several programme compositions, is a very serious musician. His fourth symphony, *In Memory of Lenin*, which was performed in Baku in 1956 and in Moscow in the following year, appeals to the listener with its depth of ideas, its nationally-tinged expressive themes and harmonies, and colourful sonorities. The composer has been especially successful in the dramatic culmination (*Passacaglia*), the fourth movement of this five-movement cyclic work. And yet as a whole the symphony is slow-paced and tiring on account of its excessive length and the ponderous structure of its movements lacking in contrast.

Gajiyev's symphonic poem *For Peace* (1951) is more compact and dramaturgically better integrated. The poem depicts the struggle of nations for a happy future. The movement grows and spreads, culminating in a mighty, all-embracing procession. The symphonic poem

works, is dedicated to the Soviet people's struggle for peace. There is a leitmotif, the theme of the song "I Must Speak," which is developed in a variety of ways, from the lyrical first movement to the grand and solemn apotheosis in the finale.

Villem Kapp, Artur Kapp's nephew, has a versatile talent: the best master of the choral style in Estonia, he is the author of numerous choral and solo songs, lyrical romances which enjoy great popularity in his republic, two symphonies (1946 and 1956) and a symphonic poem *For Peace*. His Second Symphony, a profound and significant work, deals with the lyrico-dramatic theme of the struggles and aspirations of a human personality. The second movement, *Adagio espressivo*, is a poetic landscape depicted with vividly national expressive media. The *Scherzo* (third movement), built up on the rhythms of an Estonian folk waltz, is very colourful. The highly dramatic first movement and finale take the listener into a world of life's conflicts and strife. Villem Kapp's Second Symphony was a great success both in Tallinn and in Moscow, where it was performed at the end of 1956.

Anatoly Garshnek, an ardent collector of folk songs, has shown talent and skill in his Symphony (1954), the *Partisans* symphonic suite (1951) and the oratorio *Prince Vyachko and Voivode Meelis* (1954).

Yanis Ivanov, one of the leading Latvian composers, lives in Riga and devotes much of his energies to composing symphonies. During his twenty-five years' career he has written eight symphonies, a violin concerto and a cello concerto, several symphonic poems, a great number of choral and solo songs and piano pieces, etc. In the Soviet years he composed his Fourth (*The Legend of Atlantis*, 1941), Fifth (1945), Sixth (*The Latgale*, 1950), Seventh (1955) and Eighth (1956) symphonies.

While his earlier works (for instance, the Third Symphony, 1937) show the influence of Scriabin and his later works that of Prokofiev and Shostakovich, his more recent compositions (the Sixth and Eighth symphonies) show the hand of a mature master with a personality of his own. The melodies in his best works are graphic and pronouncedly national, the musical idiom simple, precise and expressive, and the form concise and at the same time dynamic in development. All these features are particularly prominent in the Eighth Symphony, gravitating towards dramatism (the first movement and the closing section of the finale). The *Scherzo* expresses a straightforward and clear outlook

on the world, wholesome humour and enjoyment of nature; the third movement, *Andante*, nobly if somewhat austerely lyrical in the Bach and Handel vein, leads to a vigorous and life-asserting finale.

As yet Lithuania has no symphonists of any standing; the symphonies we have had occasion to hear lack originality and imagery. This fully applies even to the appealingly sincere and lyrical Second Symphony by Julius Juzeliunas, written in 1951 and clearly revealing the influence of Chaikovsky and Dvořák.

A very interesting work in the concerto genre is Balis Dvarionas' Violin Concerto (1948). Its strong point is its tender and dreamy lyricism (the second movement, *Andante molto sostenuto*) and charming dance episodes in the Lithuanian folk style (the *Quasi allegretto molto rustico* episode in the second movement and, partly, the introduction to the first movement, *Andante semplice*). The composer makes good use of folk themes and develops them with great skill.

Another Lithuanian violin concerto performed with success is one written by Edvardas Balsis in 1954.

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New "sprouts" of symphonic music are appearing in the musical cultures of those peoples of the Soviet Union which knew no European art forms before the October Revolution. In Tataria there are the symphonic suites and a poem by Nazib Zhiganov and the Violin Concerto on Tatar themes by Albert Leman; in Turkmenia—the symphonic poem *My Country* by Velimuhamed Mukhatov; in Uzbekistan—the symphonies and suites by Mukhtar Ashrafi, Alexei Kozlovsky and Georgy Mushel.

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There could be no real progress in Soviet symphonism but for the constant inflow of new talent, and it gives us great pleasure to be able to state that the recent five or ten years have brought a number of new promising names to this genre.

Herman Galynin, fresh from the Moscow Conservatoire where he was a pupil of Dmitry Shostakovich and Nikolai Myaskovsky, boldly entered the field of symphonic music in 1950 with his *Epic Poem* for orchestra, written on four Russian folk themes borrowed from M. Balakirev's collection. The *Poem* is a fresh and original work, offering

a perfectly up-to-date interpretation of old Russian songs, at the same time devoid of neoclassical stylization.

In 1955 Galynin scored a major success with his Piano Concerto which he wrote in 1945-46 while in his second year at the Conservatoire. This life-asserting composition, in which bubbling youthful vigour and audacity (the first and third movements) alternate with pensiveness and sincere, if manfully subdued, lyricism, pronouncedly Russian in character (second movement), has brought its talented author the recognition of both musicians and audiences. Recently, concert programmes have been enriched by his fascinating *Suite* for strings with a captivatingly lyrical "twilight" intermezzo in the Myaskovsky vein.

Another attractive young musician is Andrei Eshpai, a pupil of Aram Khachaturyan at the Moscow Conservatoire. So far his music is a curious agglomeration of various influences, but it holds the promise of crystallizing into an original form of its own. A Mari on his father's side (Andrei's father is a well-known collector of Mari folk-lore), he inherited from him the love for the folk music of this small Urals people, which has certain melodic elements common with Hungarian music. On the other hand, his teacher Khachaturyan has taught him to appreciate rich and colourful orchestration. His approach to folk music, love of colour and of certain harmonic devices betray the influence of the impressionists, especially of Ravel. At the same time his melodic gift, rich imagination and temperament are proof of the young composer's natural talent. These qualities which were apparent in Eshpai's first score—*Symphonic Dances* on Mari themes (1951)—are in still greater evidence in his *Hungarian Tunes*, a rhapsody for violin and orchestra (1952), his Piano Concerto (1955) and Violin Concerto (1956). Performed at the Fifth World Youth and Students Festival in Warsaw in 1955, the *Hungarian Tunes* earned Eshpai a gold medal.

Among the Russian composers who have successfully tried their hand at symphonic compositions mention should be made of the more experienced musicians: Boris Chaikovsky (Sinfonietta), Alexander Chugayev (*The Year 1905* Overture) and Galina Ustvolskaya (the *Pioneer* and *Children's* suites), and such very young composers as Andrei Petrov (the symphonic poem *Radda and Loiko* after Maxim Gorky), Andrei Volkonsky (Concerto for Orchestra and a number of orchestral pieces), and Rodion Shchedrin (Piano Concerto and suite from the ballet *The Humpbacked Horse*).

For all the diversity and sometimes contrast of these composers' personalities they have this in common: all of them are endowed with talent and searching minds, and all of them observe life closely, trying not to miss anything that is important, anything that is beautiful.

Their accomplishment of the artistic tasks may sometimes fall short of perfection; some moments may be imitative or disputable, treating life's phenomena one-sidedly and not quite convincingly—but all that is easily explained by the young composers' inexperience.

New names come to the fore in symphonic music of the other Soviet republics as well. In Armenia there is Arno Babajanyan, the author of the orchestral *Poem-Rhapsody* (1954) and *Heroic Ballade* for piano and orchestra (1950). The latter, an essentially romantic work, is a series of gorgeously picturesque symphonic variations. Its music, rooted in Armenian folk-lore, is original and colourful; the expertly written solo part (Babajanyan is an excellent pianist) is close to Rachmaninov's piano style.

Eino Tamberg, a young Estonian composer, has attracted notice with his symphonic suite *Prince Gabriel* (1955) and the witty and merry Concerto Grosso (1957), revealing an original talent and a deep and sensitive personality.

A premium was awarded at the Fifth World Youth and Students Festival in Warsaw (1955) to Azer Rzayev for his Violin Concerto, the graduation thesis of this young Azerbaijan composer. Another composer who also graduated from the Moscow Conservatoire with a concerto, but a piano one, is Rustem Yakhin, a Tatar. Later he made a name for himself in the vocal genres—romances and popular songs.

Soviet symphonic music as a whole manifests two leading trends.

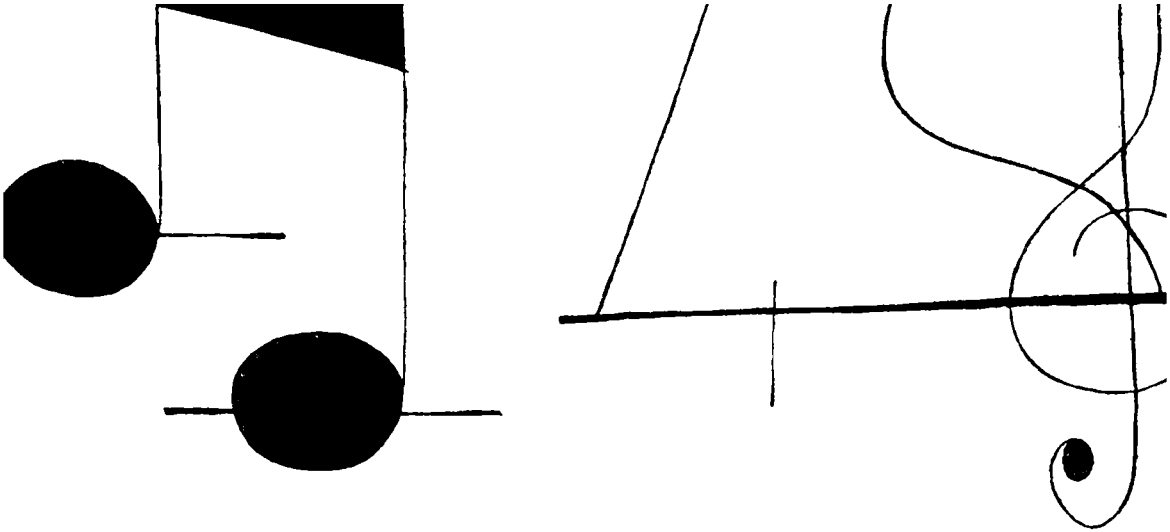
One is the striving of the composers working in this sphere to embrace new subjects suggested by reality, to introduce a new "hero" of symphonic compositions, the Soviet man. High professional skill and the great depth to which they penetrate in reflecting the life of today have enabled the composers in the best, the most significant works of Soviet music, such as the symphonies and concertos of Shostakovich, Prokofiev, Khachaturyan and, to a certain extent, Myaskovsky, to create lasting artistic values, comprehensible to both Soviet and foreign audiences.

The other is the immense spread of symphonic music which now embraces new national cultures. The peoples, which formerly had no

symphonic music, now have excellent works in this genre, for example, the symphonies and symphonic poems of A. Balanchivadze, S. Mshvelidze, O. Taktakishvili, K. Karayev, F. Amirov, A. Arutyunyan, to name only a few.

The Soviet school of symphonism is successfully carrying on the tradition of the nineteenth-century world and Russian classical music; the development of this tradition in historically new conditions has yielded encouraging results.

ORATORIOS, CANTATAS AND VOCAL-SYMPHONIC POEMS



Oratorios and cantatas in Soviet music have little in common with their remote ancestors—works in these genres by classical composers. Their revival in modern times had an entirely different reason and purpose.

During the years of revolutionary upheaval and of the Civil War, when choral singing was particularly widespread among workers and Red Army men, there appeared a great number of choral songs and marches reflecting the spirit of the heroic people risen up in arms against tsardom. Often songs were born in the battle-field, and frequently popular old tunes were supplied with new words. Somewhat later professional composers turned their attention to revolutionary subjects, producing large-scale heroic or philosophical and tragic works dedicated to the struggle and heroism of the revolutionary people. In their attempt to give these ideas the most concrete, graphic expression, the composers included choruses in their symphonies or vocal-symphonic compositions (for example, Myaskovsky's Sixth Symphony, 1924, with a chorus based on an ancient Russian chant in the finale; A. Krein's *Funeral Ode* in memory of V. I. Lenin, 1925-26, in which a chorus sings the "Internationale" and M. Gnesin's *Symphonic Monument*, 1926, with the final chorus to S. Yesenin's words).

The first Soviet oratorio, however, was the work not of a prominent composer, but of a group of ardent youths, eagerly seeking new forms of "mass proletarian music."

Creative groups, circles and unions of all and every kind were, if not the sole, at any rate the principal form of student youth activity in the late twenties.

A group called the *Prokoll,* abbreviated from "production collective" which pursued the aim of creating and disseminating music was also formed at the Moscow Conservatoire. One of the most important results of the united effort of its members was the oratorio *The Road of October,* written by the student composers A. Davidenko, B. Shekhter, V. Bely, M. Koval, N. Chemberji, Z. Levina, S. Ryauzov and G. Bruk. It was composed in 1927 to mark the tenth anniversary of the October Revolution, to words culled from works of M. Gorky, V. Mayakovsky, A. Blok, N. Aseyev, and some other Soviet poets. In addition to orchestra, chorus and soloists, the oratorio had recourse to such auditory effects as the stamping of feet, and recitation.

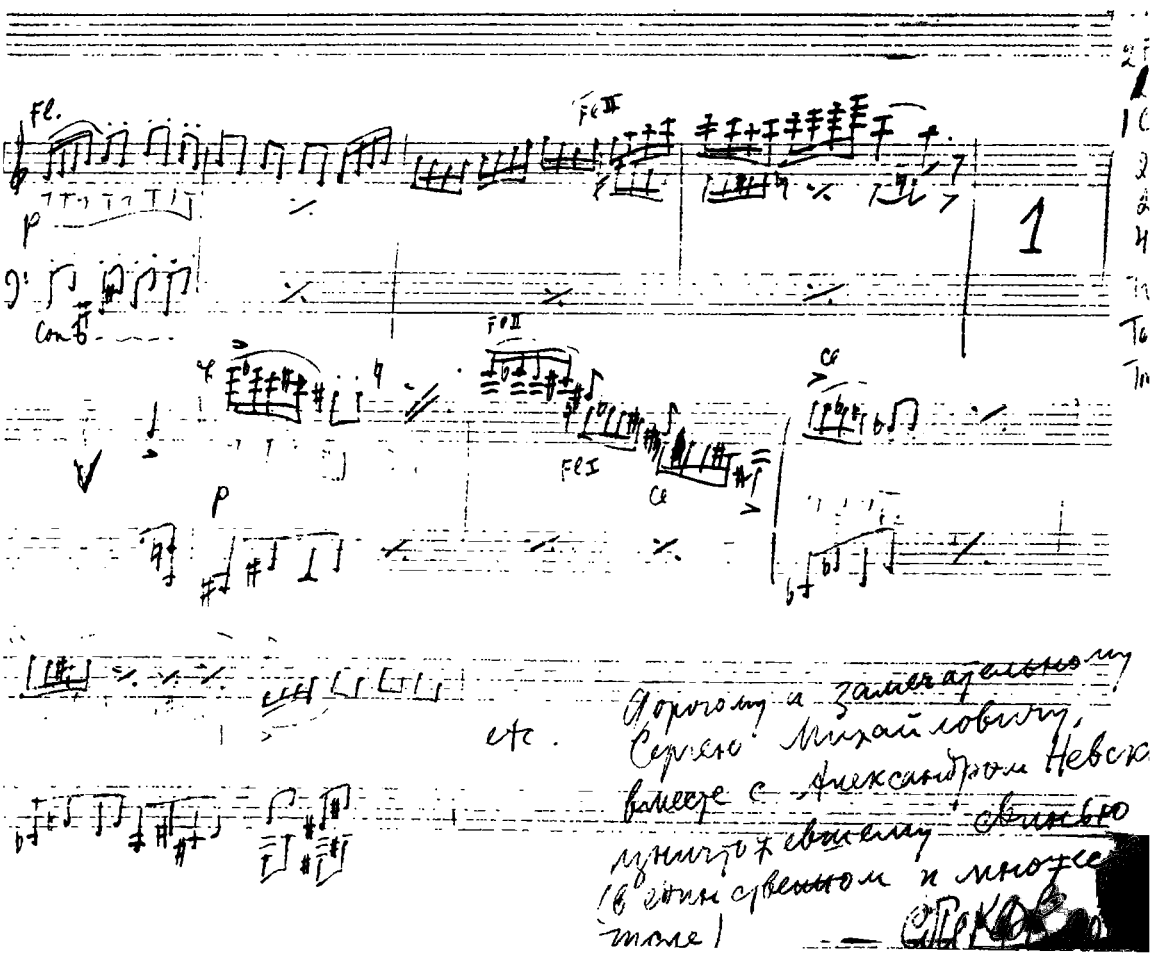
The preface written collectively stated that the aim of the work was "to create a civic oratorio dealing with the high points in the development of the revolutionary movement in Russia from 1905, through the October Revolution, the Civil War and to the setting up of the U.S.S.R." In spite of some striking episodes (particularly the two choruses by A. Davidenko—"At the Tenth Verst" and "The Street is in a Turmoil") the oratorio as a whole lacks stylistic unity and is musically crude. It possesses a purely historical interest as the first attempt to imbue this monumental concert genre with a new popular and heroic content.

Soviet vocal-symphonic works of artistic value began to appear in 1938-39 when the Second World War was about to engulf Europe. Events inspired patriotism and, significantly, Soviet composers turned to the stirring episodes in the history of the Russian people. This called to life Yury Shaporin's symphony-cantata *On the Field of Kulikovo* (1938), Sergei Prokofiev's cantata *Alexander Nevsky* (1939), and Marian Koval's oratorio *Yemelyan Pugachov* (1939). It was but natural that these works (particularly those by Shaporin and Prokofiev) moved audiences during the subsequent years of the Great Patriotic War.

Shaporin's *On the Field of Kulikovo* (to words from A. Blok's lyrical cycle) goes back to Russia's remote past—the year 1380, when Russian troops led by Prince Dmitry of Moscow routed the Tatar hordes in the battle on the Don, thus ending the era of the Tatar domination.

The symphony-cantata develops along two planes: on the one hand there is action (the Russian warriors' preparation for battle, Dmitry's

Yury Shaporin



Page of S. Prokofiev's MS. score of the music for the film ALEXANDER NEVSKY presented to film producer Sergei Eisenstein. 1938

appeal to the people, Tatars' chorus, the battle, the triumph), and on the other, extensive lyrical commentary (the Bride's Cavatina, the Mother's Lullaby, the choruses of Russian women, the poetic ballades of the Knight). The complex interweaving of the two lines determines the specifically oratorio dramaturgy of the composition. Thus at the height of the battle (the fifth part) one hears the lamentation of the women far off in Russia, alternating with the ominous chorus of the Tatars on the field of Kulikovo.

Shaporin's idiom is essentially Russian, his melodies broad and clear-cut. The Arioso of Dmitry Donskoi is noble and lofty, in the true epic vein; the translucent Cavatina of the Bride waiting for her betrothed to come from the war is gentle and meditative; the musical characterizations of the Russian Knight and the Mother are dramatic and expressive. With the two leading themes—that of the Motherland (sad in the Prologue and bright and jubilant in the Epilogue), and of the Tatars (agitated and ominous)—the composer draws a picture of the battle whose issue decided the fate of Russia.

The symphony-cantata *On the Field of Kulikovo* closely adheres to the Russian classical tradition, especially as pursued by Rimsky-Korsakov and, in a smaller degree, by Chaikovsky and Mussorgsky.

Prokofiev's cantata *Alexander Nevsky* made up of the music for Sergei Eisenstein's film of that name was the best and most original work of the genre composed in the late thirties.

The plot is laid in thirteenth-century Novgorod Rus. An immense force of Teutonic Knights, who called themselves Crusaders, invaded the Russian land from the north-west. Alexander Nevsky, the young prince of Novgorod led the Russian troops to drive out the enemy. In the battle on Chudskoye Lake, on April 5, 1242, known as the "Battle on the Ice," the "Crusaders" were turned to rout. As the Teutons were retreating, to quote the old chroniclers, "the ice broke under the weight of their heavy armour and the invaders found their grave at the bottom of the lake." This historical event has been utilized for a breath-taking film in which an important part is played by the highly dramatic and expressive music. Subsequently Prokofiev used the music for a cantata in seven parts to words by V. Lugovskoi and his own (first performed in Moscow on May 17, 1939, under the composer's baton). The joint efforts of two outstanding Soviet artists—Sergei Eisenstein and Sergei Prokofiev—produced not only a splendid film but also an outstanding musical composition.

"As Eisenstein and I were viewing a piece of the film at the studio, he made suggestions concerning the music," the composer wrote. "His suggestions were often very graphically expressed. He would say: 'here it should sound as if a baby was being snatched from its mother's arms,' or: 'I want it to be like a cork dragged against glass.' I would go home and compose the music in strict accordance with the number of seconds that particular scene allowed me.... If the representation coincided with the music and no further changes were needed, I would begin orchestrating the piece."

The film origin of the cantata has influenced its structure: in certain places the quick succession of the musical episodes was made necessary by the shifting scenes (for instance, part 5, "Battle on the Ice"); besides, Alexander Nevsky, the cantata's eponym, has no musical characterization, because in the film this role was played by a drama actor, and the composer did not invent anything new for the cantata. So Alexander Nevsky neither sings nor has a leitmotif, but he is characterized indirectly through the songs which the people sing about him. In this way a portrait of a legendary personage is produced living to this day in the people's memory. All in all, the cantata describes only two forces: the Russian people and its enemy.

The symphonic introduction—"Russia Suffering under the Mongolian Yoke" stating a sad and timid melody of a Russian song in the oboe and bass-clarinet against the transparent and shimmering background of the strings—is like a painting or the lyrical symbol of the native country in chains. This music, however, plays no part in the subsequent development.

The broad and epically virile "Song about Alexander Nevsky" (part two) speaks about the staunchness and fortitude of the Russian people and about its hero Alexander who had covered himself with glory in defeating the Swedes.

The extended episode "Crusaders in Pskov" depicts the horrible picture of the enemy's barbarous invasion of the defenceless city. The sinister and terrifying chords in the orchestra sound like the tocsin. The monotonous melody of the Crusaders' Latin chant is intoned lifelessly and dully, followed by an agitated melody in the strings, sorrowful and despairing. Then comes again the gloomy and expressionless chorale, alternating with the alarm-bell and fanfares in the trumpets.

Prokofiev's daring and novel approach to the problem of creating

through music an atmosphere of antiquity is worthy of notice. This is what he wrote about it:

"The temptation to make use of the actual music of the period was naturally great. But a brief acquaintance with Catholic 13th-century choral singing was enough to show that this music was far too remote and emotionally alien to us to be able to stimulate the imagination of the present-day film spectator. We therefore decided not to reproduce it as it sounded at the time of the Battle on the Ice, seven centuries ago, but to adapt it to the modern ear. The same applies to the Russian song of the period; that, too, had to be modernized."

Having studied a number of collections of Catholic chants, Prokofiev, evidently, did not find there what he was looking for. So he composed a chorale of his own, one in keeping with his idea of depicting the Crusaders as a soulless and evil machine, destroying all life in its path.

The powerful rousing chorus "Arise Ye, Russian People" (part four), is a response to the tragic music of the preceding episode. The song is like a driving march, while its middle episode is a clear and flowing melody. "In our Russia great, in our native Russia no foe shall live."

Part five—the monumental symphonic canvas "Battle on the Ice"—is the cantata's dramatic climax. It opens with an orchestral picture of snow-clad plains, the wintry sun rising among the mists over Lake Chudskoye. From afar come fanfares and the ominously measured gallop of the knights' horses. A line of iron-clad Crusaders slowly comes towards the Russian troops. The bleak chorale is heard only to be answered by a vivid and challenging melody in the trumpet: the Russians are attacking. The vivid, gay and heroic Russian themes gradually take the place of the lifeless chorale in the central episode—the battle scene. The picture of the ice-covered plains recurs for an instant and is immediately followed by the debâcle: the ice breaks, the knights go to the bottom. In the sudden silence after the crash the violins feelingly sing the melody "In our Russia great. . . ."

After the dramatic battle scene comes the sad and at the same time epic and exalted plaint of the Russian maiden (part six, "Field of the Dead"), the only solo in the cantata. The two melodies of this item are in the style of Russian songs, their mellow and poetic chiaroscuro being typically Prokofievian.

The Finale—"Alexander's Entry in Pskov"—is a broad picture of popular rejoicing. In a single joyous stream it presents the melodies of the Song about Alexander Nevsky ("In a great campaign Russia went

to war"), of the Motherland theme ("In our Russia great"), of a new jubilant song, and the dance tunes that were heard during the Battle on the Ice. The ringing of bells associated with old-time Russia lends the whole scene a particularly bright and festive colouring.

Prokofiev's *Alexander Nevsky* is to this day one of the best Soviet compositions of the oratorio-cantata genre. It has played a significant part in the evolution of Prokofiev's style by enriching his palette and paving the way for his next heroico-patriotic work, the opera *War and Peace.*

Marian Koval's oratorio *Yemelyan Pugachov* deals with a dramatic event in the life of the Russian people, the peasant uprising of 1773-75 headed by Yemelyan Pugachov, which shook the aristocratic empire of Katherine II.

In his monumental oratorio Koval brought into prominence the principal character and emphasized the tragic episodes of betrayal and execution. The music is distinguished by its broad and songful melodies. The composer was less successful in declamatory episodes where the poor text is particularly noticeable. The chorus is assigned a very important part; the choral episodes are in the style of either old Russian song (for instance, "Land, my Land") or more modern (the female chorus at the wedding, the chorus of the people at the execution). Pugachov is presented in various aspects—the man, the leader, the orator. His wife Ustinya is portrayed as an appealing character.

Short congratulatory, festive and other incidental cantatas, composed in all times and ages, are also well represented in Soviet music. It would hardly be necessary to enumerate here all the works of this type, so we shall mention only the best.

Song about Stalin by Aram Khachaturyan (1937) to words by the *ashug* Mirza Bairamov of Tauz is an original and attractive composition, a musical interpretation of the poet's exultation at his people's happiness. Its expressive lyrical melody, a hymn to the beauty of life, to light and joy, is based on the melodies and rhythmic elements of Armenian folk music.

Prokofiev's *Toast to Stalin* (1939) to Russian, Ukrainian, Byelorussian, Kurd, Kumyk and Mordovian folk words with music stemming from folk song, has been often performed with success. The composer conveys the feeling shared by all the Soviet peoples—love of Motherland; the music, devoid of outward show, is warmly sincere.

Stills from the film ALEXANDER NEVSKY, produced by S. Eisenstein, music by S. Prokofiev

Crusaders in Pskov

Battle on the Ice

Alexander's Entry in Pskov. (N. Cherkasov in the role of Alexander Nevsky)

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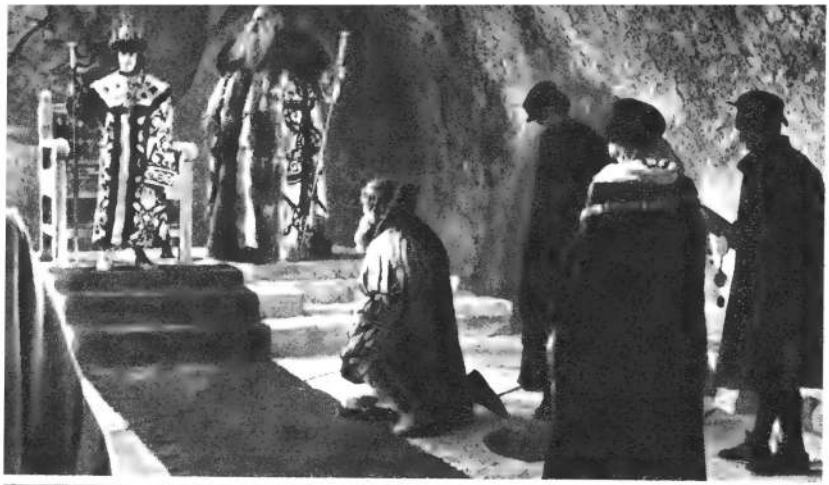

Young Tsar Ivan and the boyars

"Delivering of the three men from the burning fiery furnace." Spiritual drama

Tsar Ivan in prayer

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The people bringing their plea to Tsar Ivan. (N. Cherkasov in the role of Ivan the Terrible)

Georgy Sviridov

In the early forties—during the years of the Great Patriotic War—the heroic contemporary theme was uppermost in Soviet oratorios and cantatas. Those deserving mention are Myaskovsky's cantata *Kirov Is With Us* (1941-42), Kabalevsky's suite *People's Avengers* (1943) and Shaporin's oratorio *Saga About the Battle for the Russian Land* to words by M. Lozinsky, K. Simonov, A. Surkov and S. Severtsov (1943).

In this work Shaporin once again revealed the lyricism and the epic leaning of his talent. The purely emotional scenes, such as the peaceful picture of the Motherland, the women's lamentation, the Requiem for the fallen and the bitter "Invasion" episode have proved much more effective than the active dramatic ones ("On the Bank of the Volga," "In the Don Steppe," etc.). Nevertheless, owing to the excellent handling of the chorus in the spirit of the classical tradition and the intrinsic lyricism of the music, the oratorio was felt to be a fitting response to the events experienced by the people at the time.

The late forties and early fifties brought several strikingly vivid, highly talented and original scores proving their authors' awareness of the vital problems of the day. Those were the first oratorios and cantatas singing the poetry of free labour. The best is Shostakovich's oratorio *Song of the Forests* to words by Y. Dolmatovsky, a remarkably optimistic and proudly joyful composition. Its subject-matter, the remaking of nature, is not one commonly used for an oratorio, and yet it has been proclaimed a major success both by Soviet and foreign audiences. Shostakovich discarded all that was fortuitous in the actual work of the people and concentrated on the philosophical idea of attitude to work as a creative process for the benefit of the generations to come.

The oratorio's dramatic plan is simple and logical. The first movement, in the nature of an introductory narrative, tells of the end of the war and of the country's tremendous afforestation plans. The second movement shows the plans being carried out; its theme is "Let's Plant Woods All Over Our Country"; the third movement, "Recollections of the Past," provides the dramatic contrast, a reminder of the pre-revolutionary past when famine through drought was a frequent disaster. With the suddenness of a new scene appearing on the screen, the fanfare of the Young Pioneer bugle (the symbol of new life) is heard, introducing the next movement, "Young Pioneers Planting Woods." The subsequent movements are entitled "The Stalingraders Step Forward," "Tomorrow's Stroll," the latter—a lyrical arioso of the

tenor singing about the happiness of the generations to come who will enjoy the shade of the forests—and the final chorus, "Glory!" The oratorio made a permanent place for itself in the concert repertoire after its first performance on November 15, 1949 under Y. Mravinsky.

The public warmly acclaimed the *Cantata About Motherland* (1948-49) by the young Armenian composer Alexander Arutyunyan, also dedicated to the Soviet people's free creative work. This simple, highly emotional and compositionally harmonious work is the expression of the composer's bright outlook and his joy of living. The best parts of the cantata are its vigorous third movement, "The Feast of Labour" and the gentle and tender "Lullaby."

Arutyunyan's *Cantata About Motherland*, the best and the first composition of its kind, became a model for a long succession of copies, very much alike, in which only the outward scheme, a pale imitation of life, remained from the young composer's happy and original find. It was understandable, therefore, why we find other ideas and images, reflecting other aspects of the life in the Soviet Union, dealt with in oratorios and cantatas written in those years and possessing any artistic value.

Sergei Prokofiev's oratorio *On Guard of Peace* to words by S. Marshak, first performed under the direction of S. Samosud in Moscow on December 19, 1950, is noted for the originality of its idiom and composition. The composer believes that the defence of peace and struggle against the threat of a new war means primarily the protection of children, their unclouded life and happy future. From this stem the numerous episodes of pure and tender music, such as "We Do Not Want War," "Doves of Peace" and the "Lullaby," which are in perfect harmony with the grandiose and epic music in episodes dealing with the valour of Stalingrad's defenders and the people's heroism. The work as a whole is permeated with manful optimism—the corner-stone of Prokofiev's genius.

The Heart of Kartli,* Archil Chimakadze's cantata to words by M. Abuladze (1952) stands out from among the finest vocal-symphonic compositions written by Soviet composers in the fifties. This noble and exalted patriotic poem is characterized by integrity and depth of feelings and typically Georgian heroico-epic imagery. The cantata falls into a harmonious four-movement cycle. The opening movement—

* Kartli—the ancient name of Georgia.—*Ed.*

"The Spring of Georgia"—is a solemn song. Its subject (as that of the finale) is our present day, the Soviet people's patriotism. The two movements appeal to the listener with their broad melodies, the wealth and variety of harmonies and orchestral colour, and the symphonic development of images. And yet the two middle movements—"The Fate of Kartli" and "At the Old Fortress"—are even more attractive. They deal with the heroic past of Georgia, with the Georgian people's struggle for independence.

"The Fate of Kartli" (*Adagio*) begins with a meditative solo of the soprano, resembling a lullaby. Gradually the music grows more dramatic, reaching a stern, powerful and heroically-tense climax. This sad "lullaby" ends on a note of gentle wistfulness. The third movement, evoking a picture of a massive stone fortress, silent witness of tragic happenings of long ago, is epic and majestic, seemingly static. This austere music, filled with inner tenseness, captures the listener's imagination.

Another vocal-symphonic work by a Georgian composer is Alexei Machavariani's *A Day of My Country* (1954). Its indebtedness to Shostakovich's *Song of the Forests* is unmistakable: it is also dedicated to the joy of free creative work, presented through a series of genre pictures—songs, dances, gay and lyrical scenes.

The early fifties saw a new name in Russian vocal-symphonic music. Georgy (Yury) Sviridov, who asserted himself forcibly and took his place in the first rank of Soviet composers.

His road towards the oratorio genre was somewhat unusual: he never composed symphonies with a choral finale, nor popular songs, nor operas, nor congratulatory cantatas. A son of the people, Sviridov was intimate with the life of the peasants from his childhood, knew their feelings and aspirations. The image of the people haunted his imagination, but for long it could not find realization in his music—symphonies, piano concertos, chamber pieces and early romances. For the first time the composer felt he was giving expression to the people's inner world when he was setting to music the poems of the dean of Armenian poets, Avetik Isaakyan, whose works pre-revolutionary poets, including Alexander Blok, used to enjoy translating into Russian. Later on Sviridov fell in love with the simple and manly Muse of Robert Burns and, finally, with the stirringly lyrical talent of Sergei Yesenin.

In this way there came into being the deep and exquisite composition which its author called neither an oratorio nor cantata but a poem. The words were compiled by the composer from a number of Yesenin's works. "The Poet and His People," "The Poet and His Country," "The Poet and the Revolution," the tragic fate of a talented peasant youth who lost his place in life but who always loved his country and his people—these are the themes treated in Sviridov's poem *In Memory of Sergei Yesenin* (1956), an outstanding work of modern Russian music.

Although made up from several of Yesenin's short poems and fragments from longer ones, the poem has an inner plot, complete in itself. Six parts of the composition deal with the pre-revolutionary past and four with the Soviet days. Of course, one cannot speak here of a concrete plot, like that of a novel or a play, the term "plot" being used in a musically and poetically generalized sense, not unlike its use in regard to Schubert's song cycles.

The first two movements, "My Forlorn Countryside" and "Winter" present a picture of the vast Russian expanses, so near and dear to the heart of the Russian, who loves his country with filial devotion. One all but sees the lyrical, slightly melancholy country landscape, with squat cottages, clumps of bird-cherry trees, mowed meadows and a monastery in the distance (the soft resonant chord of the celesta and flute imitates the ringing of bells brought from afar on the evening breeze). This first epic song "narrated" by the tenor serves as the prologue of the poem: there are no events as yet, the listener is simply made acquainted with the main characters: the country and the wanderer, the poet, meditating as he wanders in places he has known since childhood.

The second (choral) song, "Winter," depicts a different picture: it would seem the bowels of the earth have burst open and impetuous whirlwinds have come loose. But what is it? Is this merely a snowstorm raging or is it perhaps a foretaste of the tempests that are destined to sweep Russia? Is it by mere chance that heroic intonations are heard in the voice of Winter?

This movement closes with the ineffably beautiful, radiant image of Spring as if growing out of the echoes of the quiescent tempest, a truly wonderful musical transformation.

Then the people appear. But who are they? The first whom the third movement ("In the Land of Yellow Nettles") presents to the listener

are convicts plodding their weary way to Siberia. The sorrowful music, manfully and restrainedly tragic, calls to mind shimmering distances, a monotonous sandy road stretching far away, to the "Siberian mountains," and creates an atmosphere of austerity (tenor solo). The succession of mournful chords, like a funeral procession, seem to foretell the poet's own tragic fate, but the movement closes with the restrained music of the beginning.

"Threshing" is a vivid choral genre scene showing the whole village at work. The composer makes use of folk-song elements and imitation effects (the sounds produced by flails), successfully creating the atmosphere of friendship and goodwill born of the collective effort.

The following two movements present new aspects of peasant life. Midsummer Night games and choral songs take the listeners into the world of ancient rites, beliefs and legends. The composer achieves this by astonishingly simple and concrete means, using transparent pastel shades, short tunes in the nature of ancient invocations, and impressive refrains of the chorus "O John the Baptist!" All this combines to turn this movement into a concrete, almost operatic scene: the listener visualizes a forest enveloped in darkness, with bonfires glowing here and there and songs and dance tunes wafted on the night breeze. The second part of the same picture ("My Mother Walked in the Forest on Midsummer Night") is the legend about the birth of the poet to the strains of songs on the magic Midsummer Night. The drawn-out recitative of the tenor resembling the Russian epic tale is followed by the same refrain as in the preceding part.

In the next section, depicting the Russian countryside during the stormy years of the Civil War, Sviridov uses two contrasting fragments from Yesenin's "Song About the Great March." He does not indulge in rhetorics but presents concrete and tangible images. The chorus "O Ye Blue Lilacs" with the alarm-bell and the people's lamentations is a sad reflection about the Motherland laid waste by the war; the "Peasant Lads" episode, built up on a perky Red Army ditty with a dashing accompaniment of the accordion, is expressive of the elemental force of the revolutionary peasants risen in defence of their rights.

The two lines developed in the poem—the fate of the poet and the fate of his people—find their consummation in the two contrasting movements closing the work.

Sviridov's music lends a new touch to the sad words of tne monologue "I Am the Last of Rural Poets": it is no longer merely the poet's regret for the "Russia sinking into the past" but his farewell to his beloved country, to life. Here the expressive declamatory melody of the tenor solo is stated against the ascetically austere harmonies of the accompaniment. In the agitated middle episode, with its disjointed recitative phrases, the shadow of death seems to hover over the poet. Two abrupt chords resound like shots in the uneasy silence, and then the chorus sings a chord without words (the composer's remark: "moaning"). This chord is at once like the soughing of the wind and the weeping of Mother Nature at the death of the poet. The concluding words of the dying poet's monologue

Soon, o, too soon, a wooden clock
Will croack out my dying hour

are uttered against this funeral background.

Abruptly, there comes the blindingly bright finale "The Sky's Like a Bell" (to words from the poem *The Dove of Jordan*), a glorious hymn to life. The epic and grandiose melody of the chorus and the full bell-like sonorities affirm the idea of the triumph of the people, of the country, in spite of the untimely death of the poet.

Sviridov's poem *In Memory of Sergei Yesenin* was first performed in the Chaikovsky Concert Hall in Moscow on May 31, 1956 with Alexei Maslennikov as soloist and Yevgeny Svetlanov conductor. The poem has ever since enjoyed tremendous success both in Moscow and Leningrad, as well as in the whole of the Soviet Union.

In 1959 Sviridov completed his *Oratorio Pathétique* to words by Vladimir Mayakovsky. This is what he himself said about his work: "It is the prevalent opinion that Mayakovsky's verses are hard to set to music. But I hear music in them, freely flowing music and broad melodies...." It took Sviridov nearly three years to complete this extensive score. The *Oratorio Pathétique* was first performed in Moscow on October 15, 1959. The conductor was N. Rakhlin, the chorus was directed by A. Sveshnikov and the soloists were Nina Isakova and Alexander Vedernikov.

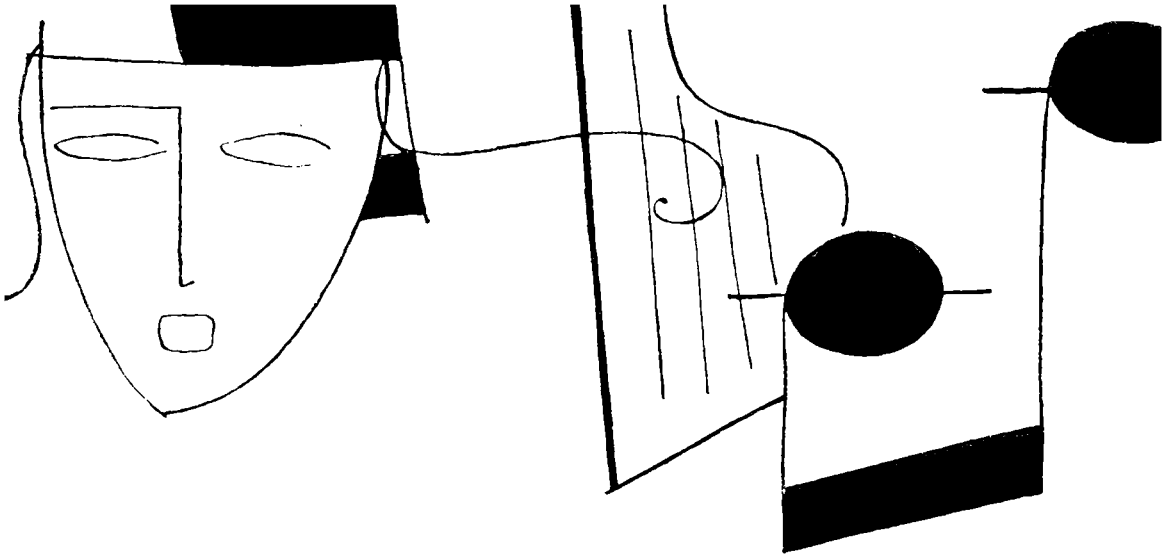
This work is again Sviridov's *own* poem about the Russian revolution and the tribune poet. In it the composer uses different poems of Mayakovsky, as well as fragments from his *Fine*. Some of the poems have

been changed in the oratorio or given a new interpretation. For instance, in the finale "The Sun and the Poet," the opening lines of the poem "An Amazing Adventure of Vladimir Mayakovsky" have been utilized to paint with sounds a broad Russian landscape, while the dialogue between the Poet and the Sun swells into a grand hymn to the poet's exalted calling "Shine on!"; in the inspired soliloquy "Our Land," filled with love of country, the composer has combined lines from three different chapters of the poem *Fine*. Acquiring a new meaning from the music these lines express one of the leading ideas of the oratorio.

Sviridov's free approach to the words makes him all the more careful in preserving intact the *spirit* of Mayakovsky's poetry. The tribune poet, "mobilized by the Revolution," stands out alive and forceful in his address to the risen working people ("March"), in the lyrical meditation about his Motherland, filled with filial love ("Our Land"), and in the stirring "Conversation with Comrade Lenin." The poet's soul of a rebel, his compassion for the oppressed and indomitable faith in victory are present not only in the passages where he speaks in his own name; they throb in the whole of the oratorio, from the energetic and austere march and the majestic "Glory" to the heroes of the Civil War, to the story of the inspired labour of the workers ("A garden-town will rise here") and the proud assertion of one's mission ("To light for ever").

The composer well realized that the innovatory poetry of Mayakovsky could not be made to conform to the Procrustean requirements of the old oratorio form; he, therefore, defined his work as "musical action." Its seven movements follow one another without a pause, alternating in big contrasting masses. This makes for dynamism, an impelling urge forward—qualities distinguishing this monumental score and revealing new aspects of Sviridov's forceful talent. In 1960, the *Oratorio Pathétique* earned its composer a Lenin Prize.

OPERA MUSIC



Opera has always served as a forum for public opinion. If we take, for instance, music in the 19th century, we will see that it was indeed to opera that great composers who held progressive views turned to expound before the large masses of listeners their lofty ideas of humanism, to call on the people to fight for justice and happiness. It was quite natural, therefore, that many of these operas were received with such enthusiasm by the progressive-minded public. When, for the first time in the history of the Russian theatre, a popular *Veche*—the republican form of government which had existed in Russian free cities, Novgorod and Pskov—was represented on the stage in Rimsky-Korsakov's *Maid of Pskov* (1872), the St. Petersburg students greeted it with a storm of applause and, as Alexander Borodin wrote in his *Memoirs* "the medical students vociferously shouted the 'Insurrection' chorus in the Academy halls and corridors." Mussorgsky's folk music drama *Boris Godunov* was given the same enthusiastic reception. In Italy, the performances of some of the operas by Rossini and Verdi gave rise to patriotic demonstrations, during which the entire auditorium sang the passages which contained so much as a hidden hint of protest against the Austrian domination.

All this clearly shows that opera possesses unlimited possibilities of influencing the minds of the masses.

"It is opera, and opera alone that brings you close to the people, that

endears your music to the real public and makes your name popular not only with individual small circles but, under favourable conditions, with the whole people," Chaikovsky wrote.

It is precisely because of the democratic nature of opera, the most comprehensible of extended musical forms, as well as its ability to portray the most varied aspects of life, that so much importance is being attached to the shaping and further development of Soviet opera.

The specific conditions under which art developed in the 20th century, however, affected opera most of all, which greatly hampered the work of Soviet composers in this sphere. In the first decades of our century, under the influence of modernism in art, both in the West and in Russia opera was degenerating and losing its significance as a forum for social ideas. Some went so far as to declare that opera had outlived its usefulness and had to be replaced by ballet and symphony. Naturalistic, expressionist and other decadent influences found their way into opera, and after the death of Rimsky-Korsakov (in 1908) the great Russian classical traditions were not continued. Russian opera on the eve of the Revolution was in a state of decay.

The most important features of opera which had to be revived in the Soviet time were its ideological content and democratism, its ability to communicate to the masses progressive social ideas by artistic means. But the first—and perhaps the chief—stumbling block that was encountered at once was the question, how should this ideological content be understood and in what way was it to be expressed in music? Neither composers nor leaders of the theatre had a clear answer to this question. Some thought that to create new Soviet opera, it was sufficient to use old opera forms, or even simply to adapt new words expressing new ideas to old music. Accordingly, in the beginning attempts were made to apply new revolutionary subjects to popular operas such as Puccini's *Tosca*, which became known as *The Fight for the Commune* with the scene laid in Paris in 1871, while Meyerbeer's *Huguenots* was converted into *Decembrists*, the action taking place in St. Petersburg in 1825. The first of these adaptations was actually staged by the Kirov Opera Theatre in Leningrad. These attempts naturally had nothing in common with the real creation of Soviet opera.

Original operas by Soviet composers first made their appearance in the twenties, but there was in them a glaring contradiction between the revolutionary declarations in the text and the old imitative musical idiom.

This is what Academician Asafyev wrote about the opera *For a Red Petrograd* by A. Gladkovsky and Y. Prussak to libretto by V. Lebedev, dealing with the defence of Petrograd from Yudenich in 1919, which was produced at the Maly Opera Theatre in Leningrad in 1925: "As compared with the subject demanding an austere and vigorous treatment, the music of the two composers has one main drawback—its rhythmic pattern is slack and its themes lack originality and direct appeal. At times there are episodes in the style of pretty parlour music, now and again we hear pleasant ariosos and sentimental cadences in the minor key, which contradict the style of the work, so that in places where the idiom should be in the *Fidelio* vein there is sugary music wedded to the revolutionary watchwords in the text."

Similar weaknesses were exhibited by all the operas on historical and revolutionary subjects produced at opera houses in those years. These were A. Pashchenko's *The Revolt of the Eagles* about the Pugachov uprising, V. Zolotaryov's *Decembrists*, I. Shishov's *The Peruke Artist* (after Leskov). While searching for the media to portray the revolutionary past, the composers usually modelled their work after some well-known opera.

It became increasingly clear that passive imitation could not produce new Soviet opera. Creative innovation was necessary not only in the choice of subjects, in the texts asserting progressive ideas, but in the musical speech of the works as well.

Some opera composers, especially young men, held that a revolutionary approach to the expressive media was sufficient in itself to make a work revolutionary, i.e., that the secret lay in discarding the operatic tradition. This gave rise, in the late twenties, to such operas as V. Deshevov's *Ice and Steel*, L. Knipper's *The Northern Wind* and some others, where up-to-date catchwords in the text were expressed through unnatural music or through a monotonous succession of sounds, rather than through melodious arias, ensembles and choruses.

The acme of this "ultra-Left" trend was Shostakovich's opera *The Nose* after Gogol, produced at the Maly Opera Theatre in Leningrad in 1930 under the baton of S. Samosud. The following passage from musicologist I. Martynov's description may give some idea of this opera: "In writing his opera *The Nose* the composer seems to have forgotten all and every requirement of opera ... for instance, his direction says that the part of Nose should be sung with the nose tightly held ... the orchestra produces all kinds of noises—the tramp-

ing of horses (celesta combined with percussions), the sound made by the razor at shaving (basses' harmonics), etc. The whole score is choke-full of such naturalistic tricks."

Needless to say, *The Nose* had little success with Soviet audiences.

A new stage in the development of Soviet opera began when new blood was infused into our operatic art and a truly creative union was achieved between tradition on the one hand and innovation on the other, which made possible to express progressive ideas and do away with eclecticism and modernistic tricks. In this respect, the role of Sergei Prokofiev as reformer of Soviet musical theatre should be emphasized, the role as yet insufficiently appreciated and studied. Almost at the same time Soviet opera received a reinforcement of young composers, such as Dzerzhinsky, Khrennikov and Kabalevsky, whose names were to be intimately associated with the development of this genre.

But before describing the work of these composers, we would like to speak of the process in the development of opera which took place in the most remote parts of the Soviet country during the fifteen or twenty years following the October Revolution.

In the twenties and thirties, while Moscow and Leningrad composers were busy looking for new methods to supplant the "outdated" operatic traditions, it was these very traditions, hallowed by Glinka, Mussorgsky, Borodin and Rimsky-Korsakov, from which proceeded the authors of the extremely vivid and original operas that came to be considered classical works in this genre in national republics, primarily in the Transcaucasus.

In the first post-revolutionary decade Georgia and Armenia already had their own professional composers, former pupils of Rimsky-Korsakov, Lyadov and Taneyev at the Moscow and St. Petersburg conservatoires, who created excellent works that became models of national classical opera.

The Georgian composer Zakhary Paliashvili, a pupil of Sergei Taneyev and the author of the operas *Abesalom and Eteri* (1919), *Daisi* (1923) and the patriotic music drama *Latavra* (1927), is justly considered the father of professional music in his republic.

Abesalom and Eteri to a libretto by P. Mirianashvili is an epic musical tragedy on the subject of a popular legend about the love of Prince Abesalom for Eteri, a peasant girl; it expresses through grandiose musical forms the lofty emotions of the characters and their strong and original personalities. The music of the opera, as well as

its plot and structure, is pronouncedly national, although the composer seldom has recourse to genuine folk melodies.

Part singing plays a very important role in Georgian folk music; some austere and exalted choruses, in developed form and with complicated fabric, are performed by folk musicians as choral cantatas. It is quite natural therefore that in the opera, too, the chorus is assigned a leading role and its part is extremely rich and varied. The people are treated as an independent character, an active participant in the drama, warmly sympathizing with the tragic fate of Abesalom and Eteri. This makes for certain oratorio qualities of the opera. In combining self-sufficient large episodes (arias, duets, choruses) with the through-going symphonic development of the musical images, the composer adheres to the principles of Russian classical opera, first and foremost, Glinka's *Ruslan and Lyudmila*, achieving in this way great inner integrity and unity of the whole.

Paliashvili's second opera, *Daisi* (*Twilight*) to a libretto by Gunia is a lyrical drama about a big, true love trampled on by ruthless feudal prejudices, about a courageous and life-loving people who can abandon itself to merryment or enter into fearless fray with the enemy, and, lastly, the conflict between personal interests and duty to one's country.

The plot is simple and not rich in action. It is deeply emotional and develops with epic slowness. The personal drama of the young girl Maro who loves Malkhaz but is against her will betrothed to commander Kiazo unfolds against a background of vividly colourful genre scenes. Everything happens at a popular festivity which goes on from nightfall to dawn—hence the title, *Twilight*. The highly original and fascinating lyrico-elegiac arias of Maro, Malkhaz and Kiazo alternate with solemn choruses of the people, fiery dances and jolly humorous songs. In some of the choral scenes the composer employs genuine Georgian songs (for instance, in the chastely-austere "Perkhuli" roundelay, in the manful "Ali-Pasha" song and the perky "Tsangala Gogona") while other choral and dancing scenes, although also in the true Georgian folk style, are the composer's own, the result of his profound study of the national folk art.

The grand finale of Act II, a gorgeous scene showing the people's patriotism, their readiness to spare no effort in opposing the foreign invader, is a natural culmination of the popular genre scenes. In the concluding act the people condemn commander Kiazo who, driven by

jealousy, had deserted his troops at a moment of danger in order to kill his rival Malkhaz. The people thus play the part of supreme moral judge of the heroes' actions.

In the meantime, Alexander Spendiarov, a talented pupil of Rimsky-Korsakov and contemporary of Paliashvili, was working in the opera genre in the Transcaucasus. His big historical opera *Almast* written after the 1917 Revolution captivated audiences with its original national colouring and high professionalism.

This is what Spendiarov wrote about his work on the opera: "While in Tiflis in 1916 I conceived an idea for an opera after Ovanes Tumanyan's poem *The Taking of Tmbkabert.* I needed folk tunes—Armenian and Persian—as material for the opera. I noted down some melodies and bought a great number of gramophone records of the songs I required, as well as all existing collections and arrangements. These served me for several orchestral episodes. For instance, I utilized the song 'Eidari' and fragments from *Nouruz Arabi* for the Persian March in Act I; for the heroine's big dance scene I used the dance tunes 'Kyandrbaz,' 'Vardkoshiks' and 'Shavali' in full."

Tumanyan's poem tells of the fight waged by the noble and courageous Prince Tatul against the Persian invaders. In the opera (libretto by Sophia Parnok) the focus is shifted to Almast—Tatul's beautiful wife whose ambition made her betray her husband. The theme of the people and patriotism has become a mere background. And yet its most original and impressive pages are the popular genre scenes—choruses, dances, the march, the *ashug*'s song—based chiefly on genuine folk melodies. They present new devices in texture, rhythm and colour, a valuable contribution towards the future development of the Armenian national style in music.

Almast was first produced in 1930, after the composer's death, on the Bolshoi Filial stage in Moscow, and in 1933 it was performed on the opening night of the new Armenian Opera and Ballet Theatre in Yerevan. Since then this classical Armenian opera has been a fixture in the repertoire.

A similar progress was being made in Azerbaijan, the third of the Transcaucasian republics, famous for its wealth of melodies throughout the Eastern countries. Even before the Revolution Azerbaijan had its own composers: U. Gajibekov, Z. Gajibekov and M. Magomayev, who wrote plays with music extemporized in the folk style and musical comedies. These forms paved the way for real opera.

In addition to the national composers, Russian masters, too, took a hand in the creation of Azerbaijan opera. Thus Reinhold Glière took great pains to study Azerbaijan folk music and composed an opera adhering to the classical Azerbaijan forms on the subject of a folk legend about Ashug Gharib—*Shah Sanam* (1st version 1924, 2nd version, 1934). In this opera to libretto by M. Galperin, the composer utilized and subjected to symphonic development nearly 30 Azerbaijan songs, *mugams* and *ashugs'* tunes, recorded by folk-lore collectors.

This is what Uzeir Gajibekov wrote about the significance of Glière's opera for Azerbaijan national music: "The experiment of composer Reinhold Glière has been of immense importance in that it has introduced symphonism into Azerbaijan music and created complex musical forms on the basis of Azerbaijan music.... He could not command all the melodic wealth of our folk-lore, he could not study all the original modes, rhythms and fine shades of our music, and yet in his *Shah Sanam*, a work of talent, he has laid a strong corner-stone for new operatic art in Azerbaijan."

A truly classical Azerbaijan opera was Uzeir Gajibekov's own *Kör-Oghly* to libretto by G. Ismailov and M. Ordubady dedicated to the Azerbaijan people's struggle against the Turks. The opera was first staged in Baku in 1937. It gives a vivid picture of Kör-Oghly, a folk bard, *ashug*, who was at the same time an intrepid warrior, leader of the uprising. In his musical characterization the composer skilfully employed the methods of the *ashugs*; he unhesitatingly introduced into his score folk instruments such as the *tar* and the *zurna*, thereby enriching his orchestra. The opera's best passages are the overture and the arias of Kör-Oghly and of his beloved Nigyar, and also the popular choruses and dances.

To return to the Russian opera in the thirties.

The failure of his *Nose* baffled the twenty-four-year-old Shostakovich. For the first time in his life he pondered seriously on the correctness of the interpretation of "modernity" and "revolutionary approach to art" as given by his overzealous friends from the Modern Music Association.

The years 1930-32 Shostakovich spent working on a new opera—*Katerina Izmailova (Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk District)* after Nikolai Leskov, to a libretto written jointly by the composer and A. Preis. Unlike the author of the story who exposed the cruelty and crudity of provincial life, the composer set out to write an apology of the heroine.

He treated the murders she committed as a protest against the established order of life, against the stifling atmosphere of the nineteenth-century merchant-class existence. Katerina's musical characterization was meant to whitewash her. To use Dobrolyubov's words, the composer regarded her as "a ray of light in the kingdom of darkness." There is no other positive character in the opera. The music describing Katerina is opposed to the grotesque and exaggerated characterizations of the other personages. The composer entrusts her with sincerely moving romances (for instance, in Scene 3) and stirring, tragical monologues (Act IV). The convicts' choruses in the final act are also excellently done. But this opera cannot be regarded as an undisputable success. Its least convincing trait is the attempt of the composer to depict Katerina as a positive character, a victim of the "kingdom of darkness."

The *première* of *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk District* took place on January 22, 1934 at the Maly Opera Theatre in Leningrad. Later on the opera was produced in Moscow—at the Nemirovich-Danchenko Musical Theatre and the Bolshoi Filial, as well as at many theatres abroad. Its production gave rise to heated disputes and discussions, especially after it was condemned in a *Pravda* editorial entitled "Confusion in Place of Music," January 28, 1936.

The mid-thirties saw the flourishing of a genre of Soviet music which has in some measure influenced the development of opera. This was the *popular song*, displaying novel idiom and permeated with optimism and revolutionary fervour. The best of these songs were quickly made known through the sound cinema and the wireless and enjoyed a country-wide popularity. Simultaneously there appeared operas on modern subjects in which revolutionary ideas were expressed by means of melodic elements borrowed from popular songs, in perfect keeping with the content. In spite of a certain crudity of the "song" trend in Soviet opera, it was responsible, especially in the beginning, for the first shoots of a genuinely new style, equally free from modernistic refinement and passive eclecticism.

The authors were young composers, Ivan Dzerzhinsky, Tikhon Khrennikov, Leon Khoja-Einatov and some others who were making their first steps in opera. Considering the progress made in this genre since the thirties by these composers and some others (Dmitry Kabalevsky, Yury Shaporin, Sergei Prokofiev), it will be best for us to study the work of each of them separately.

And Quiet Flows the Don, the first opera of a student composer Ivan Dzerzhinsky after Mikhail Sholokhov's epic to libretto by L. Dzerzhinsky, was a far from ripe and perfect composition. Yet it possessed verve and vitality. It left no doubt as to its author's talent and showed that he had an aptitude for capturing the spirit of present-day music. Hence the sense of modernity which was in harmony with the subject: the personal drama of Grigory and Aksinya against the background of the First World War and the 1917 Revolution in the Don area.

Academician Asafyev noted that: "*And Quiet Flows the Don*, based on the episodes from Sholokhov's celebrated novel, breathes with the freshness of folk lyricism and the realism of its characters. People with living intonations behaving in a natural way appear on the stage once again. The melodies have been re-animated with the song element and lyricism once again expresses wholesome emotions."

And Quiet Flows the Don contained some realist features which determined the style of Soviet opera. The popular song became the leading characteristic of the people united by revolutionary fervour (for instance, the final chorus "From Border to Border" which has gained world popularity). The song is also used in the musical characterization of the leading personages, Aksinya, for one.

The opera, first performed at the Maly Opera Theatre in Leningrad on October 22, 1935, was very successful during the theatre's guest performances in Moscow in January, 1936. Subsequently it was produced by almost all the opera theatres in the Soviet Union.

And Quiet Flows the Don became the symbol of an entire trend in Soviet opera—the "song" trend. Other operas written and produced at about the same time, such as *The Kamarinsky Peasant* (1933), *Namesday* (1935) and *Mother* (after M. Gorky, 1939) by V. Zhelobinsky; *Mutiny* (1938) by Khoja-Einatov; *Battleship Potemkin* (1939) by O. Chishko; *The Perekop* (1939) by Y. Meitus, V. Rybalchenko and M. Tits, are closely related to the *And Quiet Flows the Don* by the dramaturgic principles followed. Dzerzhinsky's next opera *Virgin Soil Upturned* (1937) after Sholokhov, also belongs to this trend.

All the operas we have mentioned deal with Soviet reality or with the Soviet country's revolutionary past. The popular scenes with choruses calling to fight for freedom form the dramatic pivot. The music is songful, melodious and ingenuously emotional.

And yet, for all its youthful freshness, the "song" opera had some serious shortcomings which were not slow to manifest themselves.

Academician Asafyev wrote on the subject: "The healthy trend we are discussing, though championing truth and directness with youthful zeal, proved incapable of accomplishing the task set before it and finally resulted in oversimplification in the matter of creating Soviet operatic style. The importance of recitative and its employment tapered down to either a kind of measured speaking common for all characters, or to a dry, primitive and naturalistic presentation of prose speech designated by different intervals. Rhythm became monotonous. The constant use of the march tread of the popular song, the unavoidable scheme 'they said, then marched on, singing' of the 'rousing' finales of active (i.e., giving the development of action) scenes, turned into a cliché the *choral* mass expression of heroic emotions, that most valuable contribution of living song to Soviet opera. The art of ensemble-writing to present the peaks of *dramatic* collisions was completely lost. Melody, the powerful means of emotional expression and characterization, was substituted by strophic and fragmentary modern street ditties, akin to limerick and sentimental romance. This, of course, was necessary to provide the realist atmosphere, but all the same it brought about the degeneration of aria as an expression of passionate depth of feeling."

One would have thought that after his promising *début* the talented Dzerzhinsky would further perfect the dramatic structure and musical idiom of his operas in order to overcome the shortcomings just mentioned. However, such was not the case. Instead, the composer left the conservatoire and began turning out one opera after another—but alas!—they were no longer successful. Gradually his music began to lose the freshness of *And Quiet Flows the Don*, while his shortcomings, of which Academician Asafyev had spoken, became more and more apparent.

Dzerzhinsky is the author of the operas *Thunderstorm* after A. Ostrovsky (1940), *The Volochayevsk Days* (1941), *The Blood of the People* (1941), *Nadezhda Svetlova* (1942), *Prince Lake* (1946), the comic opera *Snowstorm* after A. Pushkin (1946), *Far From Moscow* after V. Azhayev (1954), and *The Fate of a Man*, after M. Sholokhov's story (1960).

But neither a patriotic theme, nor a subject taken from classical literature nor a grand epic of labour (*Far From Moscow*) could bring the composer the success he sought so much. In *Far From Moscow*, for instance, the bold and broad conception—the feat of labour performed by the Soviet people in the hard war years—and the desire

to lay a new path in art are brought to nought by the scanty store of expressive media at the composer's command. As a result, the musical characterizations of the most varied personages are reduced to an elementary "arithmetical mean." It is impossible, hearing this or that aria or song, to tell to which of the characters it may belong. In addition, the opera's dramaturgy is fragmentary, the plot is artificially patched together and some incidents, not connected with the main plot, are given undue prominence. For all the effort lavished by the Maly Opera Theatre in Leningrad on its production, Dzerzhinsky's opera had but a very short run.

The best of the "song" operas was Khrennikov's *In Storm* to libretto by A. Faiko and N. Virta on the subject borrowed from Virta's novel *Alone*. It was first staged at the Stanislavsky and Nemirovich-Danchenko Theatre in 1939 and has remained in the Soviet operatic repertoire to this day. Its subject is the acute class struggle in the Russian rural life during the Civil War, and the counter-revolutionary kulak rebellion headed by Ataman Antonov in Tambov Region (1920-21). The main personages—Natasha, the daughter of the peasant Frol Bayev, Lyonka, the young labourer, his mother Aksinya and the kulaks—are characterized in vivid song scenes and through expressive arias. The composer has been successful in giving true-to-life characteristics to Frol, the "seeker of truth" and to the kulak Storozhev; indeed, the latter's aria "Men are coming from the North" very forcefully portrays a strong and ruthless enemy at bay. The lyrical scenes between Natasha and Lyonka, and especially Natasha's dramatic episode in Scene 4, appeal to the listener with their direct emotionality, sincerity and ardour. The composer has skilfully incorporated into the music of these episodes the melodic elements of urban Russian songs and popular romances. The Antonov men are aptly characterized by a drunkenly-sentimental song which shows their moral bankruptcy and the inevitable doom of the kulak revolt. The image of the old peasant woman Aksinya with her song-lamentation "The falcons have flown away" and the generalized image of the war-weary peasants (the drawn-out chorus "It's time for ploughing") are among the composer's successes.

The opera's weak points are the character of Listrat, the hero, depicted by abstract, conventional means, and the scene in Lenin's reception-room, totally deprived of music. The recitatives show lack of imagination and the strophic marching songs are monotonous. Nevertheless, the opera's indisputable merits have ensured it a place in the repertoire.

Khrennikov's second opera, *Frol Skobeyev* to libretto by S. Tsenin (1950), also produced at the Stanislavsky and Nemirovich-Danchenko Theatre, is a contradictory and stylistically uneven work. Along with happy melodic finds (the duet of Frol and Savva and some solo songs) and witty humorous scenes (the nurse's songs, the trio of the tipsy peasants), it contains weak episodes devoid of interest. It is regrettable that the light comedy subject borrowed from a seventeenth-century Russian satirical story should be burdened with the discourses of "progressive-minded" boyars about the destiny of Russia. Besides, these ponderous moralizations lack originality, being nothing else but imitations of Mussorgsky.

On the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of the October Revolution the Bolshoi Theatre produced Khrennikov's new opera, *Mother*, with libretto by A. Faiko after M. Gorky's novel. This opera, too, follows the "song" tradition. Its melodies are derived from urban popular songs and its compositional backbone is formed of arias and songs (both solo and choral). In keeping with the revolutionary subject, the composer makes wide use of quotations from revolutionary songs. For instance, in the demonstration scene the workers' chorus sings the "Varsovienne," the "Marseillaise," and "Comrades, the Bugles Are Calling." Khrennikov's own choral song "We've Had Enough Sorrow" characterizing revolutionary heroes is very attractive. As always, the composer has succeeded in his depiction of genre scenes (the song of the factory workers, the song of the tipsy woman, and stanzas of the merchant on the spree). The heroic and the lyrical lines—the image of Pavel Vlasov, his speech at the trial, the characters of his revolutionary friends, the relations between Pavel and Sasha—are treated less happily. The numerous monologues of Nilovna, Pavel's mother, are very uneven.

To sum up, it should be noted that the "first-born" of the "song" genre (Dzerzhinsky's *And Quiet Flows the Don* and Khrennikov's *In Storm*) were by far the best works in this tradition and, for their own time, possessed a higher artistic value than the later works by the same composers, written in the same style.

It is quite clear that a single happy idea (the utilization of popular songs in an opera on a modern subject), however original and promising it may be, could not by itself solve *in full* the great creative tasks facing Soviet opera composers.

At the end of the thirties Soviet opera acquired a reformer in the person of Sergei Prokofiev, .who, upon his return from abroad composed four works in this genre: *Semyon Kotko* after V. Katayev's story "I Am the Son of the Working People" (1939), *Betrothal in a Nunnery* after R. Sheridan's play *The Duenna* (1940), *War and Peace* after Lev Tolstoi's novel (lst version 1946 and 2nd, 1952) and *The Story of a Real Man* after B. Polevoi (1948). While the work of other composers showed glimpses of a new Soviet operatic style now and again, Prokofiev was the first (and so far the only) composer who made major achievements in this sphere and contributed to world opera works of lasting artistic value. It should be noted, however, that the great artist and innovator produced his opera masterpieces after his return to his native country where his deep interest in musical theatre received a new stimulus from national and patriotic themes. Prokofiev had a very clear idea of the demands the operatic genre made on the modern composer.

"To write an opera on a Soviet theme is by no means a simple task," the composer wrote. "One deals here with new people, new emotions, a new way of life and here many of the forms applicable to classical opera might prove unsuitable. For example, an aria sung by the chairman of a village Soviet could, with the slightest awkwardness on the part of the composer, be extremely puzzling to the listener. The recitative of a commissar making a telephone call may also be misunderstood.

"I had long wanted to write a Soviet opera, but I hesitated to undertake the job until I had a clear idea of how to approach the task. Besides it was not easy to find a plot. I did not want commonplace, static, trivial plot or, on the contrary, a plot that pointed too obvious a moral. I wanted live flesh-and-blood human beings with human passions, love, hatred, joy and sorrow arising naturally from the new conditions."

Prokofiev found such a subject in Katayev's story and applied himself to the work on the opera. He was attracted by the true and stirring picture of life in the Ukrainian village at the time of the Civil War. He strove to combine the intensely dynamic action with the typically operatic forms (choruses, ensembles, solo and dialogue scenes), to penetrate the speech peculiarities of his characters and to reproduce them in their vocal parts. Well aware of the danger of opera "becom-

ing provincial" that lay in the "song" trend which was connected with oversimplification, and acknowledging the leading role melody had to play in opera, Prokofiev considered that composers had to strive for "a new kind of simplicity" of art which would be free from banality. His approach to the melodic structure of *Semyon Kotko* is of great interest.

"Any melody is easy to memorize if its design is familiar. On the other hand, if the design is new the melody will not impress itself on the ear of the listener until he has heard it several times. And more: an opera may have few tunes, but if each tune is repeated several times the listener will remember them. If there are too many tunes the listener will be unable to absorb them all at the first hearing and is apt to mistake abundance for poverty.... Although it would obviously have been more advantageous from the standpoint of immediate success to have filled the opera with melodies of familiar design, I preferred to use new material and write new melodies of new design and as many as possible. This sort of music may be difficult to understand at first, but after two or three hearings much will become clear. It is better for the listener to make new discoveries each time than to say, after hearing the opera for the second time, 'Oh, I've heard all that before, there's no use listening to it any more.'

"New life, new subject-matter demand new forms of expression, and the listener must not complain if he has to exert a little effort to grasp these forms."

We see that in his treatment of new subjects Prokofiev from the outset chose the line of greatest resistance, one that only a great master could pursue. This method proved valid in enabling the composer to create a work of high aesthetic value, but the scenic fate of the opera was thereby greatly complicated.

The plot is rather simple. Semyon Kotko, a young Ukrainian peasant, comes back to his native village after the termination of the First World War. He dreams of a peaceful life, of marrying Sophia Tkachenko, the daughter of a rich peasant. Soviet power has been established in the village. Remenyuk, Chairman of the Village Soviet, and Tsaryov, the sailor who has been sent down from the city, are ready to act as match-makers. Suddenly a German punitive detachment appears in the village. The invaders kill Tsaryov and on Tkachenko's instigation put Semyon's house on fire. Remenyuk and Semyon manage to escape to the partisans. In the finale the partisans come to free the

ABESALOM AND ETERI, opera by Z. Paliashvili staged by the Tbilisi Opera and Ballet Theatre
Centre: D. Andguladze as Abesalom, T. Takidze as Eteri

SHAH-SANAM, opera by R. Glière, staged by the Baku Opera and Ballet Theatre, 1934. Scene from act IV

AND QUIET FLOWS THE DON, opera by I. Dzerzhinsky staged by the Bolshoi Theatre. Moscow, 1937. Scene at the Mill, act II

Composer T. Khrennikov (left) and conductor B. Khaikin at a rehearsal of the opera *Mother* at the Bolshoi Theatre. Moscow, 1957

IN STORM, opera by T. Khrennikov staged by the Stanislavsky and Nemirovich-Danchenko Musical Theatre in Moscow. Reading of Lenin's decree, act IV

BETROTHAL IN A NUNNERY (THE DUENNA), opera by S. Prokofiev staged by the Opera Studio of the Moscow Conservatoire, 1959. Left to right: A. Savchenko as Don Carlos, Y. Maximenko as Mendoza, Y. Yegorova as Louisa, V. Khizhnyak as Don Antonio

WAR AND PEACE, opera by S. Prokofiev staged by the Stanislavsky and Nemirovich-Danchenko Musical Theatre. Moscow, 1957. An episode from scene 2. In the centre: V. Kayevchenko as Natasha Rostova, L. Petrov as Andrei Bolkonsky

WAR AND PEACE, opera by S. Prokofiev staged by the Bolshoi Theatre. Moscow, 1959. Scenes from act II.
Top photo: scene 2. Y. Kibkalo as Andrei Bolkonsky, G. Vishnevskaya as Natasha Rostova
Lower photo: scene 8. Beginning of the Borodino Battle

THE DECEMBRISTS, opera by Y. Shaporin staged by the Bolshoi Theatre. Moscow, 1953. Scene of the uprising in Senate Square, act II

BOGDAN KHMELNITSKY opera by K. Dankevic staged by the Kiev Oper and Ballet Theatre in 195 Khmelnitsky receiving Mo cow ambassadors in square in Pereyaslavl

Composer D. Kabalevsky (centre) plays fragments from his opera THE TARAS FAMILY at the Stanislavsky and Nemirovich-Danchenko Musical Theatre. Standing left to right: producer L. Baratov, conductor S. Samosud, librettist S. Tsenin

THE TARAS FAMILY, opera by D. Kabalevsky staged by the Kirov Opera and Ballet Theatre in Leningrad, 1950. Episode from scene 2. Left to right: I. Yashugin as Taras, O. Kashevarova as Antonina, Y. Mishchenko as Nasar, O. Mshanskaya as Yevfrosinya, B. Kalyada as Nastya

THE TAMING OF THE SHREW, opera by V. Shebalin staged by the Bolshoi Theatre. Moscow, 1957. Scene from act I. Y. Kibkalo as Petruchio, G. Vishnevskaya as Katharina

THE GADFLY, opera by A. Spadavecchia staged by the Perm Opera and Ballet Theatre, 1957. Prison scene from act IV. Y. Luder as Arthur, V. Popov as Cardinal Montanelli

THUNDERSTORM, opera by V. Trambitsky after A. Ostrovsky. Scene in the gully from act II. G. Timofeyeva as Varvara, Y. Vutiras as Kudryash (Sverdlovsk Opera House, 1958)

FLAMES OF VENGEANCE, opera by E. Kapp staged by the Estonia Opera and Ballet Theatre in Tallinn, 1950. Scene from act III

JALIL, opera by N. Zhiganov staged by the Bolshoi Theatre, 1959. Episode from scene 7. Left to right: P. Lisitsian as André, I. Ishbulyakov, soloist of the Tatar Opera and Ballet Theatre, as Jalil

FOREST SONG, opera by V. Kireiko staged by the Opera Studio of the Kiev Conservatoire, 1959. Scene from act I. M. Rakov as Lukash, D. Petrinenko as Mavka

GÜLSARA, opera by R. Glière and T. Sadykov staged by the Navoi Uzbek Opera and Ballet Theatre in Tashkent, 1950. Scene from act IV

ULUGBEK, opera by A. Kozlovsky staged by the Navoi Uzbek Opera and Ballet Theatre in Tashkent, 1958. Left to right: G. Podgorny as Usama, M. Slipchenko as Ulugbek

village in time to save Sophia forced by her father to marry Klembovsky, a landlord. Then the opera's heroes join the partisans and leave the village to fight for a better life.

The libretto written by Valentin Katayev after his own story admirably preserves the local colour, and this has greatly facilitated the composer's task of providing apt and truthful characterizations, giving all but tangible portraits of the personages. One of the finest episodes is the betrothal scene with a grand quintet and ritual songs. The climax is reached in Act III, the most integrated dramaturgically, growing in intensity from the cloudless serenity of the love scene, a "nocturne," to the tragic episodes of Tsaryov's death, the madness of Lyubka, his betrothed, and the conflagration. The extended finale of this act is based on the repetition of a motif from Lyubka's lamentation, "O no, no, that's not Vasily!", blending with the clanging of the alarm-bell, exclamations from the chorus and all the soloists.

The genre scenes of the partisans' artillery drill comes as an anticlimax after this tragic culmination, nor does the concluding marching song provide the necessary balance required by the grand opera form. But these dramaturgic shortcomings do not diminish the musical worth of the opera and its significance as an innovatory work.

Semyon Kotko gave rise to discussion, all the more heated because it was produced almost simultaneously with Khrennikov's *In Storm*, its diametrical opposite as regards style. The *première* of Prokofiev's opera took place at the Stanislavsky Theatre on January 23, 1940. Although after the war it was not revived until 1957, certain musical and dramaturgic devices first employed by Prokofiev in this opera proved viable and exercised a pronounced influence on other opera composers dealing with kindred subjects, as for instance, Kabalevsky who in his *In Flames* and *The Taras Family* used the Prokofiev method of characterizing the enemy by means of an ominous, weird-sounding instrumental theme.

A certain resemblance may be traced between the characterizations of gentle and tender young girls in *Semyon Kotko* and *The Taras Family*. Thus Prokofiev's searchings of methods to express the modern theme embodied in his apt recitatives and the important part played by symphonic development have influenced the evolution of Soviet opera on modern subjects.

Just before the war Prokofiev completed his charming and bright lyrico-comic opera *Betrothal in a Nunnery* (to his own libretto) which

was only produced six years later, November 3, 1946 by the Kirov Opera and Ballet Theatre in Leningrad.

"I do not think I have been mistaken in emphasizing the lyrical aspect of *The Duenna*," the composer wrote. "The love of two young, spirited, imaginative couples—Louisa and Antonio, and Clara and Ferdinand, the obstacles to their love, the happy betrothal, the poetic background of Seville where the action takes place, the tranquil evening landscape spreading before the eyes of the lovers, the nocturnal carnival, the old abandoned nunnery. At the same time I have been careful not to overlook any of the comic elements, for here Sheridan excels. . . .

"The structure of Sheridan's play, with its abundance of couplets, enabled me to introduce many separate numbers—serenades, ariettes, duets, quartets and large ensembles—without interrupting the action."

The capital work of the last period of Prokofiev's life, one that took him eleven years to complete (1941-52) was the opera *War and Peace* after the novel by Lev Tolstoi with a libretto by the composer and M. Mendelson-Prokofieva. The composer justly considered it to be his *magnum opus*.

Soon after the end of the war the Maly Opera Theatre in Leningrad began rehearsing Prokofiev's *War and Peace*. Just then the composer decided to add two more scenes to the existing eleven. These were The Ball at a Dignitary of Catherine's Times (Scene 2) and Russian Generals' Council of War at Fili (Scene 10), composed in 1946-47 as can be seen from the dates in the composer's handwriting on his MS. preserved in the Central Literary Archives in Moscow. In this version the opera had thirteen scenes and the producer hesitated whether he should make some cuts in it or divide the production between two nights in order to preserve the music intact. Chief conductor Samuil Samosud insisted upon the two-night plan. The first part (eight scenes, including all lyrical scenes and one dealing with war) was performed by the Maly Opera Theatre on June 12, 1946 with S. Samosud conductor and B. Pokrovsky producer. The second part (scenes 8 to 13) was performed only once at a private preview, on December 4, 1948. The failure of this preview and the prevalent opinion that the opera could not possibly be performed on one night made Prokofiev (together with Samosud) draw, on December 5, 1948, the "plan of *War and Peace* for performance on one night with list of permissible cuts." This plan has often been referred to in the press and even endowed with the virtue of the composer's last will. But a careful reading of the doc-

ument will show that the cuts offered in it distort the logic of the dramatic plan and injure gravely the second, grand and monumental, part of the opera dealing with the theme of the people and patriotism.

Prokofiev was not fated to see his beloved brain child performed in full but till his death he hoped he would. The stage history of *War and Peace* between 1955 and 1959 is the history of doing away with the myth of a second version "improved by the cuts."

When the one-night version was performed for the first time at the Maly Opera Theatre in Leningrad (April 1, 1955, E. Grikurov conductor and B. Pokrovsky producer), it was found necessary to preserve the Napoleon's Headquarters During the Battle of Borodino scene which Prokofiev had rejected. Altogether ten scenes and a choral apotheosis were performed. The same abridged version was used for the Kiev performance in 1956 (A. Klimov conductor, V. Sklyarenko producer).

The production of *War and Peace* on November 8, 1957 at the Stanislavsky and Nemirovich-Danchenko Musical Theatre (S. Samosud and A. Shaverdov conductors, L. Baratov and P. Zlatogorov producers) was a major event in Moscow's musical life. All musicians well remember the long and fruitless scholarly discussions around the opera, the disputes as to its genre, the accusations of "neglecting the people as a character," of leanings to modernism, to expressionism and what not; they well remember the productions of the abridged opera, after the composer's death, in Leningrad, Kiev, Florence and New York.

At long last, practical experience, that supreme criterion of truth, put an end to the idle surmises of the learned scholars. The talented company of an opera theatre that is unassuming but known to uphold firm realist traditions calmly and unhesitatingly cut the "Gordian knot" by staging, for the first time in the opera's history, the *entire* work, all of its three acts and thirteen scenes with almost no cuts to speak of, and quite astonishing things came to light. The first revelation was that the opera fitted very well into one evening. All the accusations of neglecting the "popular" or the "personal" aspect, of an alleged weakness of the drama element or of the composition were proved groundless. The audiences were at last able to hear this brilliant work in full, to enjoy its unique beauty, to appreciate the harmony and logic of its form. The theatre not only succeeded in conveying the charm and originality of Prokofiev's music—stirringly lyrical, pure and fragile in the scenes devoted to Natasha and her love troubles, austere and permeated with epic grandeur in the scenes before the battle of Borodino, the war

council in Fili, the Moscow fire and the episode on the Smolensk road—but it also gave convincing stage interpretations of Tolstoi's well-known and loved characters.

The Bolshoi Theatre *première* of *War and Peace* took place on December 15, 1959. This production, enjoying notable success, presented for the first time the choral epigraph to words by Lev Tolstoi and poet-partisan Denis Davydov. Especially impressive were the grand folk scenes. Prokofiev's rich score stood out in all its splendour as interpreted by conductor A. Melik-Pashayev. The producer was B. Pokrovsky and the stage artist V. Ryndin.

It looks as though the version of *War and Peace* now used may be regarded as final, as the one in which the process of "coming into being" of this masterpiece has found its completion.

When Prokofiev wrote this opera, he possessed a vast store of experience, not only in the opera, but in the symphony, oratorio and ballet genres. This particular work was called to life by the patriotic upsurge which he experienced as a Soviet artist, citizen and humanist during the great war against fascist invasion.

The opera has preserved the main episodes of Tolstoi's novel connected with its two plots—the personal drama of Natasha and Prince Andrei and the heroico-tragic epic of the people's defence of their country from Napoleon's armies. The final version, accordingly, contains the following scenes: 1. Night at Otradnoye; 2. Natasha's First Ball (where she makes the acquaintance of Prince Andrei); 3. At Old Prince Bolkonsky's; 4. Ball at Hellen Bezukhova's (Natasha meets Anatole Kuragin); 5. At Dolokhov's (Anatole prepares to elope with Natasha); 6. In Akhrosimova's House (Natasha is prevented from eloping, Natasha in despair, Natasha repentant); 7. In Pierre Bezukhov's Study; 8. On the Eve of the Battle of Borodino; 9. Napoleon's Headquarters During the Battle of Borodino; 10. Russian Generals' Council of War at Fili (they decide to abandon Moscow); 11. Moscow Occupied by the French; 12. The Cottage at Mytishchi (Natasha meets the dying Andrei and is forgiven by him); 13. On the Smolensk Road (the retreat of the French; the apotheosis of the Russian people's victory).

Prokofiev has treated the literary text with deference and care and this has determined the peculiarities of the opera's structure. The presence of two parallel subject lines in it is due not to contempt of the operatic tradition but follows logically from the novel itself. The composer has been so scrupulous in choosing his material that almost

all the details of the plot have been incorporated in the opera. In places where a generalized expression of ideas and emotions is demanded by the subject, these are embodied in choruses, arias or monologues. When, however, the novel affords no material for some situation or other, no such situation is introduced into the opera. For instance, the listeners sometimes express a regret that there is no love duet between Natasha Rostova and Andrei Bolkonsky. But the novel does not contain a single episode of this nature. The composer felt it impossible to narrate the feelings and emotions of Prince Andrei as described in the novel, and he refused to make up a scene whose typically "operatic" nature would make it conspicuous against the rest of the scenes taken from the novel. As for putting conventional "operatic" words into the mouths of Tolstoi's characters, Prokofiev would never have ventured to do it.

But then how truly poetic are such scenes as Night at Otradnoye, Natasha's Waltz (Scene 2), and the reconciliation of Natasha with the dying Andrei (the Cottage at Mytishchi). Although much is left unsaid, the story of this beautiful and exalted love makes a lasting impression on the listener's imagination.

A propos of "things left unsaid," it should be remarked that modern dramatic works and particularly modern cinema art (in its best films) have them in plenty. This is one of the devices by means of which the dramatic forms of imaginary life on the stage or screen can be brought closer to reality. In real life people do not say aloud all they think and feel—there is much that is implied, merely hinted at. But such "things left unsaid" in a work of art necessitate a rich undercurrent which—in an opera—is revealed through music. This is precisely the main dramaturgic principle that Prokofiev employed in *War and Peace*. For him, the most important element in each scene was the continuous development of action, without repetitions either of the text or long musical episodes, and without pauses of any length. In this way, much that is left unsaid is spoken in music.

Prokofiev has achieved continuity of dramatic action throughout his opera. He tries to make the traditional opera forms as inconspicuous as possible by subjecting them to the development of action, this action being psychological as often as not. For instance, in Scene 1 (Night at Otradnoye) a continuous process takes place in Prince Andrei's soul, from disillusionment to a newly awakened longing for happiness. Thus his meeting with Natasha is

prepared as well as the psychological atmosphere in which the plot—the birth of their love—is introduced.

But finished items are not characteristic of *War and Peace* as a drama. The listener of our day is carried away by the intensity and impetus of Prokofiev's music, by the highly dramatic conflicts and by the composer's power to make each recitative phrase reveal the individuality of his characters. Great innovator that he was, Prokofiev managed to find an original and psychologically true musical solution of each scene and each situation.

In composing his arias, duets and monologues Prokofiev did not confine his task to giving a musical interpretation to individual lyrical moments or direct conflicts (moments when conflicting emotions are struggling for ascendancy in a character's heart). Such one-mood episodes (the contemplative and bright duet between Natasha and Sonya in Scene 1, Natasha's arioso full of a nervous expectation in Scene 3), as well as the intensely-dramatic conflict episodes (Natasha's repentance in Scene 6) depict the characters in evolution, which is especially true of Natasha and Prince Andrei. Of particular significance, however, is the ability of Prokofiev—in addition to portraying what is outward and self-evident—to comprehend and convey the depth of human psychology, the most complex emotions, aspirations, longings and hopes. In this respect the scene of Andrei dying in delirium is a masterpiece, not merely surpassing all that has hitherto been achieved by Soviet opera composers, but indeed, equalled only by a few passages in the operas of Chaikovsky (scenes 4 and 5 of *The Queen of Spades*) and Mussorgsky (the delirium and death scene of Boris Godunov). Every time one hears this scene one marvels at Prokofiev's daring—the daring of a genius. Only a genius could take an unpromising, mainly descriptive and seemingly *non-musical* passage of Tolstoi's prose and reveal its *profoundly musical* psychological essence, expressing by means of sounds all that the character feels and experiences and holding up to the audience the innermost depth of his being grappling with death. Truly, a worthy task for innovator in opera! Had Prokofiev composed nothing but the delirium scene of Prince Andrei, this artistic achievement alone would have been enough to make his name famous.

In the second half of the opera (scenes 8-13), mass choral scenes, creating an atmosphere of apprehension and alarm, acquire tremendous importance. The theme of war and people's sufferings in The Eve of the Battle of Borodino is akin to that in "Arise Ye, Russian People"

chorus from *Alexander Nevsky*. The heroico-epic choruses of peasants and the popular levy, the colourful soldiers' marching songs, the grand figure of Fieldmarshal Kutuzov, the clear-cut characters of Russian generals, of Napoleon and the French marshals—all this creates an austere musical picture of the 1812 Patriotic War with tremendous conviction and irresistible impact.

The valuable acquisitions of *War and Peace*, opening up broad vistas before Soviet opera, are its combination of innovation with wise adherence to the traditions of the Russian classical opera, the unsurpassed sense of modernity displayed not only in psychologic characterizations and in the image of a heroic people, but also in the absence of long-windedness, in the brisk and tense development of action and in the ability to lay bare the undercurrent of seemingly simple, sometimes insignificant words.

The Story of a Real Man, Prokofiev's last opera (after Boris Polevoi's work of the same title), was composed in 1947-48 and first performed at a preview by the Kirov Opera and Ballet Theatre in Leningrad on December 3, 1948. Its actual *première* took place seven years after the composer's death at the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow in October, 1960, with Mark Ermler as conductor and Georgy Ansimov producer.

Prokofiev set out in this opera to give true-to-life portraits of plain but courageous and intrepid people, and he strove to make his musical idiom as democratic as possible. He composed his themes in the style of folk song and used genuine Russian songs in his arrangement. The score abounds in ariosos which the composer uses for characterizing the brave airman Alexei, his beloved Olga, the Commissar, and other *dramatis personae*. At the same time he preserves the method of symphonic development and poignant characteristic recitatives of his former operas. The first act of the opera contains quite a few real finds in this sphere.

The Story of a Real Man furnishes extra proof of the thesis that Prokofiev's operatic style was not immutable, but that it underwent an evolution and, like his symphonic style, developed towards a wise simplicity as distinct from elementary thinking.

A considerable contribution to Soviet music has been made by Dmitry Kabalevsky with his operas *Colas Breugnon (Master of Clameci)* after Romain Rolland (1937), *In Flames* (1942), *The Taras Family* after B. Gorbatov's story "The Unvanquished" (lst version 1947 and 2nd, 1950), and *Nikita Vershinin* on the subject of V. Ivanov's play *Ar-*

moured Train 14-69 (1955). They afford sufficient material to judge of Kabalevsky's evolution as apera composer and to establish the presence of an *original theme* in his opera output. This theme, that of the ordinary man expressing the feelings and aspirations of the entire people, is clearly discernible in *Colas Breugnon*, and predominates in *The Taras Family* and *Nikita Vershinin*.

Fine lyricism, psychological penetration and symphonic thinking—the characteristic features of Kabalevsky's wise, sensitive and lively talent—manifested themselves in his very first opera. His music convincingly portrayed the versatile and vivacious personality of Colas Breugnon, a generous nature symbolizing the optimism, wit and genius of his people. Unfortunately, the weak libretto by V. Bragin treating Rolland's genre subject as a ponderous melodrama, and some drawbacks in dramaturgy prevented the opera from securing a place for itself in the repertoire, and it is only individual items (the overture, symphonic entre'actes, songs and arias) that are performed in concerts.

The main characters in *The Taras Family* to libretto by S. Tsenin are ordinary Soviet people, members of a worker's family. The events of the Second World War and fascist occupation disrupted their accustomed mode of life and made them think and act in a new way. The composer has best depicted the character of Nastya, a young girl fresh from school, innocent and artless, a dreamer of day-dreams. She is made aware of her patriotic duty, of her place in the life-and-death struggle in store for all of them by her brother Stepan and her schoolfellow Pavka. Nastya is swayed by conflicting emotions when she and a group of her friends, Komsomol members, are entrusted by the partisans with the blowing up of her old school now occupied by the fascist H.Q. For her the school is a symbol of her happy childhood, of life before the war. But Nastya finds the strength to suppress her hesitation and fulfil her mission.

The love scene between Pavka and Nastya and her exultant monologue ring with such cloudless happiness and confidence in life that the sudden enemy invasion comes as a bolt from the blue. However, the fragile, timid and dreamy young girl is undaunted, her fighting spirit grows and strengthens. Her defiance of the enemy is the focal point of the opera, the climax in the development of the drama. Nastya's heroic behaviour fills the listener's heart with just pride in the intrepid Soviet youth and brings home again the horrors of war.

The choral episodes, of which the tragic ones are especially impressive, portray the Soviet people. The closing chorus in Scene 1, "The nights are aglow with fires" is based on a genuine folk melody, dramatically developed, another one—"O my native country" sung by the women driven into fascist slavery—constitutes the opera's tragic climax and ranks with the composer's best creations.

The Taras Family is performed not only in the Soviet Union, but also abroad, for instance, in Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Rumania. In spite of certain shortcomings, it is a definite achievement of Soviet opera.

Nikita Vershinin, written also to S. Tsenin's libretto and produced at the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow in 1955, is a weaker work. It deals with a modern subject—the events of the Revolution, the Civil War and the guerilla war in the Far East in the early twenties, still fresh in the memory of the older generation. Kabalevsky strove to capture the musical spirit of the events occurring in the midst of the people. The score, therefore, abounds in peasant and revolutionary songs, the music is permeated with the melodic and harmonic elements of the Russian song. Not only the choruses are in the style of the folk song, but also the parts of the main personages, Nikita and his wife Nastasya. The character of whiteguard Captain Nezelasov, the commander of the armoured train who hates the people and is doomed to destruction, is very convincingly depicted.

As is usual in Kabalevsky's operas, the orchestra plays a very important role. It gives the musical characterization of the taiga symbolizing the might of the people, of the enemy—the whiteguards—and also aptly imitates the sound of the moving armoured train, its whistle, factory siren (the signal to start the uprising), etc.

A Soviet opera of the post-war period which is enjoying a well-merited success is *The Decembrists* by Yury Shaporin, first produced in 1953 by the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow and the Kirov Opera and Ballet Theatre in Leningrad. The opera dealing with the revolutionary uprising against tsarism in 1825 to libretto by V. Rozhdestvensky on the subject borrowed from a play by Alexei Tolstoi was the result of nearly thirty years' work on the part of the venerable composer. Its melodious music filled with exalted civic ideas follows the Russian classical tradition. The composer draws extensively on folk music (especially in the fair scene) and conveys with consummate mastery the musical atmosphere of the times, the spirit of the epoch.

In the most effective scenes the music sings with revolutionary

heroism and scales the height of dramatic expressiveness. One of such scenes is the meeting of the Decembrists at Ryleyev's on the eve of the uprising. The warlike song of Kakhovsky ("To arms, to arms!"), Ryleyev's deep meditations about the destinies of his country ("O Russia, O my native land!"), the ensemble calling on to action ("Our country is suffering") faithfully express the revolutionary ardour of the heroes of December 14, 1825, their patriotism and hatred of despotism. This scene closes with a hymn to Pushkin's well-known words:

Believe, my friend, it will arise,
The dawn of happiness untold,
Our slumb'ring land will ope her eyes
And when the throne in ruins lies
Our names will also be recalled!

These, the opera's finest, pages draw as it were the "collective portrait" of the heroes.

There is warm lyricism and purity of feeling in the love scenes between a young Decembrist, Prince Shchepin-Rostovsky and his beloved Yelena.

Although not free from certain shortcomings—tardiness of development, too strict an adherence to tradition in the musical speech, lack of dramatic contrasts and the disputable characterizations of negative personages—*The Decembrists* is nevertheless one of the best Soviet operas.

It should not be assumed that the repertoire of Soviet opera houses is limited to the above-mentioned works. It includes such operas as Alexander Kasyanov's *Stepan Razin*, and *Yermak*, Antonio Spadavecchia's *The Mistress of the Inn*, *Ordeal* and *The Gadfly*, Kirill Molchanov's *The Dawn*, *Del Corno Street*, Vladimir Rubin's *Three Fat Men*, Grigory Shantyr's *The City of Youth* and others. A successful production at the Bolshoi Theatre is Vissarion Shebalin's *Taming of the Shrew* after Shakespeare, rehearsed under the Czech conductor S. Halabala and the young producer G. Ansimov in 1957. Its brilliant and graceful music shows Shebalin as a very fine musician and a perfect master of the orchestra.

The Gadfly, an opera by Antonio Spadavecchia to libretto by I. Keller after the well-known novel of E. L. Voynich first performed in Perm on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the October Revolution, is an interesting work.

The music, written in the *verismo* tradition, possesses a dramatic drive, is emotional and laconic. It gives precise characterizations to the conflicting elements of the drama—(father and son who find themselves in the opposite camps). The evolution of Arthur, a simple-minded religious youth, into a fearless revolutionary giving his life for the freedom of Italy, is also shown through music.

Opera in the non-Russian republics is represented by numerous works worthy of mention. Among the Ukrainian operas of the 1940s the best is Yuly Meitus's *The Young Guard* to libretto by A. Malyshko after A. Fadeyev's novel (1950). It deals with one of the most stirring episodes of the last war—the fight and heroic death of the members of an underground Komsomol organization in the town of Krasnodon.

The opera contains fine ensembles depicting the "collective portrait" of its heroes. The music, built up on the genuine melodies and melodic elements of Ukrainian folk songs, old revolutionary songs and Soviet popular songs, is essentially melodious. The episodes based on the elements of popular sentimental and elegiac romances are less convincing, and it is to be regretted that the composer has used these elements for the individual characterizations (arias, duets), owing to which the vocal parts seem all alike. The opera as a whole is a stylistically uneven work. Nevertheless, it can be regarded as an acquisition of Soviet opera in that it is an earnest attempt at giving musical expression to a modern heroic subject.

The Young Guard has been produced at many opera houses, both in the Soviet Union (the best of these was the 1950 production at the Maly Opera Theatre in Leningrad) and abroad.

The opera *Bogdan Khmelnitsky* by Konstantin Dankevich to libretto by A. Korneichuk and W. Wasilewska (final version 1953) deals with the reunification of the Ukraine with Russia effected in 1654 on the initiative of Hetman Bogdan Khmelnitsky who led the Ukrainians' struggle for national independence.

In composing his numerous choral and solo songs for the opera Dankevich drew largely on the wealth of Ukrainian folk-lore, particularly *dumas*—historical songs. His own melodies, too, are in the style of folk songs. Khmelnitsky and his comrades-in-arms, Zaporozhye colonels Krivonos and Bogun, are characterized through melodious arias and songs. The theme of Bogun's love for Solomia is very expressive and lyrical.

Unfortunately, the opera is somewhat long-winded, it lacks active symphonic development, and the orchestration abounds in blaring outwardly triumphant culminations.

The last two decades have seen a further expansion of Soviet opera into national cultures, some of which had no professional music at all prior to 1917. For instance, in Byelorussia operas have been written by Y. Tikotsky (*Mikhas Podgorny*, 1939, and *The Girl From Polesye*, 1952), A. Bogatyryov (*In the Depth of Polesye*, 1939, and *Nadezhda Durova*, 1956); these works have been successfully produced at the opera theatre in Minsk.

A number of interesting historical operas have been composed in the Baltic republics: E. Kapp's *Flames of Vengeance*, G. Ernesax's *Stormy Coast* in Estonia; V. Klova's *Pilenai* in Lithuania. Operas on modern subjects include M. Zarins' *Towards New Shores*, G. Ernesax's *Arm in Arm* and L. Normet's *Light in Koordi*. Many of these works contain stirring pages describing the people's fight against fascist invaders in the years of the last war (*The Singer of Freedom* by E. Kapp and *Marite Melnikaite* by A. Račiunas).

The Singer of Freedom to libretto by P. Rummo tells of the period from June 21, 1940 when the bourgeois government was overthrown in Estonia, to September 22, 1944 when the Soviet Army freed the republic from the Nazis. The two historical dates are depicted in the Prologue and the Epilogue—large choral scenes framing the entire work. Other choral scenes in all three acts are also impressive, austere and simple. The composer has given highly expressive characterizations of the poet Raju and his betrothed Arm. The finest episode musically is the scene of Arm's death and her farewell to her country.

Original operas have also appeared in Tataria. Mention should be made in the first place of *Jalil* (1957), an opera by Nazib Zhiganov, a talented opera and symphony composer. The work is dedicated to Musa Jalil, the Tatar poet who valiantly fought against fascist aggression in the Patriotic War and died in the Moabit Prison. The subject alone is enough to grasp the listener's attention and arouse his deepest sympathies. The libretto by A. Faisi has certain structural peculiarities. The scene is first laid in a Moabit cell with Jalil sentenced to death. Pictures from his life pass before his mind's eye in succession: his native Kazan, his family, the front, the prisoner-of-war camp, his sham collaboration with the fascists, his arrest. These episodes appear before the listener as the recollections of the poet. The

opera is fired with the ardour of Jalil's poetry, lines from which are sung by many of the personages. Zhiganov's music, vividly national and inspired, is highly dramatic and symphonically developed, his expressive media are quite modern. The centre of attention is the inner world of the hero (dramaturgically the opera follows the tradition of Chaikovsky). Jalil is characterized by the lyrical aria "My songs," the dramatic monologue "Forgive me, motherland," the agitated aria "Do not believe," the poetic story of the dream and the heroic final monologue projected into the future.

Popular scenes, too, are very successful: there is a dashing chorus of Red Army men, a sad vocalise of the war prisoners, lyrical women's choruses. The best is Scene 6. The people at first voice their contempt of Jalil whom they believe to be a traitor, but the truth dawns on them at the moment of his arrest, and they sing glory to the hero. The choral part in the Mussorgsky tradition is complex and varied.

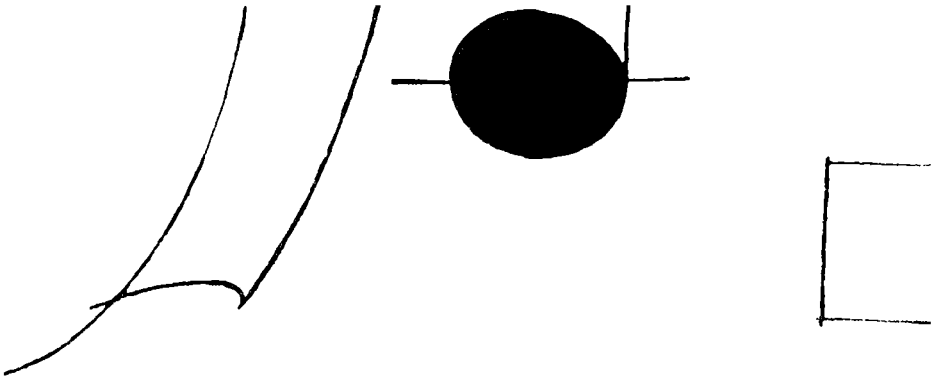
Altogether *Jalil* is a profound and forceful work of contemporary Tatar music, proof of its professional maturity. Performed during the Ten-Day Festival of Tatar Literature and Art in Moscow in 1957, it was warmly received by the audiences. In 1959 it was staged by the Bolshoi Theatre.

The operas recently composed in the Transcaucasus are *Unbidden Guests* by A. Bukiya (Georgia), *Artsvaberd* by A. Babayev (Armenia), *Sevil* by F. Amirov and *Azad* by J. Jangirov (Azerbaijan).

In the thirties, it was the mode in the Central Asian republics to put on plays with musical numbers. As time went on composers began writing real operas based on folk songs on specifically national subjects, both legendary and modern. Russian Soviet composers are helping their colleagues in this respect. The national operas are: M. Tulebayev's *Birzhan and Sara*, Y. Brusilovsky's *Dudarai* (Kazakhstan); *Leili and Mejnun* by R. Glière and T. Sadykov, *The Great Canal* by S. Vasilenko and M. Ashrafi (Uzbekistan); *Zukhra and Tahir* by V. Mukhatov and A. Shaposhnikov, *Shasenem and Gharib* by D. Ovezov and A. Shaposhnikov (Turkmenia); *Ai Churek* and *Toktogul* by V. Vlasov, A. Maldybayev and V. Feré (Kirghizia); *Vose's Uprising* by S. Balasanyan and *Pulat and Gulru* by S. Saifitdinov (Tajikistan).

Not all of the above operas are of equal artistic merit but all of them are proof of the progress of opera in the U.S.S.R.

BALLET MUSIC



During the London tour of the Soviet ballet in the autumn of 1956, a *Times* critic wondered if the poetry of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* could be conveyed without Shakespeare's words. The Bolshoi production of Prokofiev's ballet, preserving intact the tragedy and giving adequate translation of each word into the language of true poetry, gave an emphatic *Yes* to this question. The dramatic tension during the performance was so great that the public dared not applaude some performer or other, even when they wanted to, so as not to disturb the general atmosphere created by the action on the stage. The performance proved beyond all expectation and only seeing it with one's own eyes could give one an idea of the true qualities of this most famous of Moscow's arts.

That was quite natural. Even before 1917 Russian ballet was universally acclaimed as the best in the world, and since then Soviet art has been steadily developing and perfecting the traditions of pre-revolutionary ballet with great success.

In speaking about choreography—the plastic expression of human emotions, thoughts and aspirations—it should be stressed that the reason why this art attained so high a level in Russia was because it was always inseparable in spirit from the all-powerful art of

music. Everybody is familiar with the fascinatingly poetic *Swan Lake*, *Sleeping Beauty*, *Nutcracker*, *Raymonda*, with the fiery cascades of Glinka's Lezghinka and Borodin's "Polovtsian Dances." Can one imagine Russian ballet without Chaikovsky and Glazunov, without the ballet scenes in the operas by Glinka, Borodin and Mussorgsky?

The tradition of Russian ballet is not confined to choreography alone. In the first place it implies meaningful, poetic and fascinating *ballet music*, containing images and ideas revealed by means of dance.

Following in the footsteps of Russian classics, Soviet composers have further expanded the art of ballet. It is indeed in this genre that masterpieces have been created, boldly and in a new way developing the great traditions of the past. The music of Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet* and *Cinderella* and Khachaturyan's *Gayaneh* is world-famous; the dances from Krein's *Laurencia*, Karayev's *Seven Beauties*, Machavariani's *Othello* and Glière's *Red Flower* enjoy wide popularity; Asafyev's *Fountain of Bakhchisarai* had a tremendous success in London.

In the early twenties Soviet ballet was the arena for a host of conflicting trends and theories. There were few who did not realize the necessity of introducing new and progressive ideas of the revolutionary era into this art, but it was very difficult to find the right methods to do it. There appeared numerous performances with modernist tricks; attempts were made at supplanting ballet with "proletarian" acrobatics and athletics. The classical ballet continued to exist alongside all this, quite unaffected by the new trends. And perhaps it was natural that the first sprouts of a new choreographic style and new ideological content appeared in just these ballets, outwardly traditional, with their classical connections not broken off.

An important contribution towards the evolution of Soviet ballet was Glière's *Red Poppy* produced at the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow in 1927. The story (written by M. Kurilko, a painter) tells of a Soviet ship entering a Chinese port, of the friendship between the Soviet sailors and the Chinese, of the love between young Tao Hua and the Russian captain whose life she saves. It is a romantic ballet. Real events alternate in it with Tao Hua's fantastic dream, and Chinese scenes with such popular Western dances of the time as the charleston. Act I is the best musically, with its vivid characterization of Soviet sailors (the variations on "Yablochko," a dashing ditty of the revolutionary years).

Tao Hua, the heroine, is swayed by the customs and prejudices of old China but she feels drawn to the Soviet people, to the light of a new life. Accordingly, she has two themes, a stylized Chinese melody and an agitated one, in Chaikovsky's vein (the latter is developed and acquires dramatic tensity in the course of the ballet).

Original mass scenes play a prominent part in the plot. The Soviet captain is the weakest spot, a conventional character; his part is passive and he is as conventionally characterized by the "Internationale" theme.

The ballet was produced at all Soviet opera houses with equally great success. In 1949 the Bolshoi Theatre staged it again (revised by the composer); since 1956 it has been known as *Red Flower.*

Glière, the dean of Soviet composers (he died in the summer of 1956 at the age of 81) wrote several ballets in the last years of his life. In 1949 he composed *The Bronze Horseman* for Pushkin's 150th birthday, in 1952—*Taras Bulba* (after Gogol), and in 1955 he revised his early ballet *The Comedians* bringing it into closer conformity with its literary source, Lope de Vega's *Fuenteovejuna* and giving the revised work the title of *The Daughter of Castile.*

The Bronze Horseman successfully performed in Moscow, Leningrad and other cities, is the most significant of these works. The music is simple, easy to dance, and has some lyrical and emotional passages (the love of Yevgeny for Parasha). The style adopted for episodes occurring in the days of Peter the Great is that of 18th-century music. The flood scene and the apotheosis "Hymn to the Great City" are very impressive.

Along with Glière, Boris Asafyev's work influenced the shaping of Soviet ballet in the early stages.

Academician Asafyev, the famous Soviet music scholar, was at the same time a prolific composer, author of 27 ballets, to say nothing of music in other genres. Historically and artistically *The Flame of Paris* (1932), *The Fountain of Bakhchisarai* (1934) and *The Prisoner in the Caucasus* (1938) are the most valuable of his ballets.

The Flame of Paris to libretto by N. Volkov and V. Dmitriyev produced at the former Mariinsky Theatre in Leningrad on the occasion of the fifteenth anniversary of the October Revolution (November 7, 1932) was the first of the Soviet heroic mass ballet representations. It depicts events of the French Revolution of 1789: the march of the

Marseilles Battalion, popular uprising and the taking of Tuilleries on August 10, 1792.

In Asafyev's own words, he worked on the ballet "not only as a dramatist and composer, but as a music scholar, historian and theoretician, even an author, resorting to the methods of modern historical novel." A close study of historical materials provided him with prototypes for his characters. He largely drew upon the music of the French Revolution, not only folk and popular (songs, dances, the famous "Carmagnole," "Marseillaise" and "Ça ira") but the works of contemporary composers such as Grétry, Gossec and Méhul. In some of the scenes he used chorus. All this enabled the composer to evoke the heroic atmosphere of the times, to create a dynamic, volitional and unrestrainedly gay music, like that filling the streets and squares of revolutionary Paris.

For his characterization of the royal court Asafyev quoted Lulli, Gluck, the court dances (minuet, saraband, etc.). The passages he used were chosen for their gloomy, tragic character in order to show the doom of the old world.

In his desire to make his music documentary Asafyev concentrated on the historical atmosphere and the mood of the people to the detriment of individual characterizations. Consequently, neither Jeanne, the popular heroine, nor Diane Mireille, the actress, nor any of the other *dramatis personae* have musical characterizations of their own, their personalities being created by scenic methods alone. On the whole, however, Asafyev's score enabled the producers to stage a dynamic, mass ballet with the revolutionary people as its main character. *The Flame of Paris* long remained a model of Soviet heroic ballet. Subsequently other composers created heroic ballets of greater artistic value, such as *The Heart of the Mountains* by A. Balanchivadze, A. Krein's *Laurencia*, A. Khachaturyan's *Spartacus*, V. Solovyov-Sedoi's *Taras Bulba*, N. Peiko's *Joan of Arc*. But *The Flame of Paris* blazed the trail for all of them.

Asafyev's next important work was the lyrical ballet *The Fountain of Bakhchisarai* to N. Volkov's libretto borrowed from Pushkin's poem. Here, too, there was scope for study and stylization: the composer set out to convey the spirit of the times that gave birth to the poem, the atmosphere not of the scene of action, but of nineteenth-century Russian romanticism. In employing musical forms and methods character-

istic of the day, he consciously committed such an anachronism as introducing a waltz into the harem scene. The only quotation, however, is the romance "To the Fountain of the Bakhchisarai Palace" by A. Gurilyov, in the Prologue and Epilogue; the two have the same scenic realization—the figure of Khan Girei bent in mute sorrow before the fountain.

The best delineation in the ballet is the lyrical, pure and fragile Maria, characterized by music stylistically related to the Gurilyov romance. The Tatar Khan Girei, the lord of the Crimea, is characterized by rhythmically pungent, harsh and elementary music. Zarema, the beautiful but unloved wife of Khan Girei, has no individual characterization: her dances are accompanied by Oriental music "in general." Act I with the scene laid in Poland structurally follows the Polish Act from Glinka's *Ivan Susanin* (polonaise, cracovienne, mazurka and waltz).

The Fountain of Bakhchisarai, produced by R. Zakharov as a choreographic lyrico-dramatic poem, has become famous thanks to Galina Ulanova's superb presentation of Maria.

Like *The Flame of Paris, The Fountain of Bakhchisarai* started a new trend in Soviet ballet—the genre of lyrico-psychological drama on a classical subject.

Asafyev's *The Prisoner in the Caucasus* to libretto by N. Volkov, after a romantic poem by Pushkin (produced in Moscow and Leningrad in 1938) is worthy of mention. In it, simple, unaffected and sincere people—the Circassians—are contrasted to the representatives of St. Petersburg "high life" in the twenties of the 19th century. The Caucasian dances are composed in the style of the mountaineers' folk music (but in only two of them genuine folk themes are quoted). The majestic scenery of the Caucasus is characterized by an austere leitmotif. The gentle young Circassian girl has a tender theme. The episodes in St. Petersburg, again in the manner of the "parlour" music of the day, are much weaker.

No matter how assiduous Asafyev's efforts at capturing the style of music of different times and peoples, real artistic values were nevertheless created by other composers who assimilated the national characteristics of music easily and naturally. This becomes particularly evident if one compares the music of *The Prisoner in the Caucasus* with that of the Georgian composer Andrei Balanchivadze's *The Heart of the Mountains* (to libretto by G. Leonidze and N. Volkov)

cutio—have short and definitive leit-motif portraits done with a few strokes.

Romeo is characterized by two main themes, a lyrical and meditative one showing him as a romantic youth and dreamer, and the other impetuous and passionate—his love theme. But the supreme creation of Prokofiev's noble Muse is his Juliet. Galina Ulanova wrote about this heroine: "His music lives in the parts I perform, it is the creater and the soul of my dance, his Juliet is my favourite heroine, the focus of that light, humanism, spiritual purity and loftiness that captivate one in almost all of Prokofiev's works."

Juliet's musical characterization undergoes incessant inner growth and transformation. The bright theme, child-like in its purity, revealing the fragility of her nature, at the close of the ballet becomes now translucently-sorrowful, now doomed and again tragic and hopeless. The bright hymn-like strains of this theme in the scene of Juliet's death express the triumph of love over death.

The gloomy, harsh and mordant feud theme with its war-like fanfares and march rhythm characterizes several personages—the cruel and arrogant Tybalt and Juliet's parents. The mirthless dance of the knights at the ball is based on this theme stressing its medieval associations.

The vivid genre scenes and comic episodes bring into stronger relief the realism of the ballet, its closeness to life, lending to it a truly Shakespearean scope.

Cinderella to libretto by N. Volkov after Charles Perrault's fairy-tale, was completed in 1945, the year the war ended. Prokofiev was experiencing an inflow of creative strength and poured untold riches into this work with the generosity of a master—freely, eagerly and happily.

The production of the ballet that same year at the Bolshoi Theatre by R. Zakharov with Ulanova in the title role was a sparkling, festive event. *Cinderella* truthfully portrayed the simple and profound characters of the folk tale and conveyed its humanitarian idea.

Prokofiev wrote: "The fairy-tale offered a number of fascinating problems for the composer—the atmosphere of magic surrounding the fairy godmother; the twelve fantastic dwarfs that pop out of the clock as it strikes twelve, reminding Cinderella that she must return home; the swift change of scene as the Prince journeys far and wide in search of Cinderella; the poetry of Nature personified by the four fair-

ies symbolizing the four seasons—spring, summer, autumn and winter—and their companions.... I tried to convey the different characters through the music—the sweet, pensive Cinderella, her timid father, her ill-tempered stepmother, her selfish sisters, the passionate young Prince—in such a way that the spectators could not but share their joys and sorrows."

For all its elegance, impeccable taste and emotionality, the music of *Cinderella* does not present the tangibility and vivid contrasts of themes and characterizations which strike one in *Romeo and Juliet*. Ulanova has shrewdly remarked that: "One could hardly expect the ballet *Cinderella* to be more in relation to the ballet *Romeo and Juliet* than Shakespeare's tragedy is to Perrault's fairy-tale. And although the fairy-tale, too, is immortal, though it too has philosophical depth, passion and humanity, *Cinderella* could never rise to the sublime heights of *Romeo and Juliet*."

Prokofiev did not live to see the production of his last ballet, *The Tale of the Stone Flower*, to libretto by L. Lavrovsky and M. Mendelson-Prokofieva after Bazhov's Urals fairy-tales. He wrote the music during 1949 and 1950 but it was not until the 1952-53 season that Lavrovsky started work on the ballet jointly with G. Ulanova, V. Preobrazhensky and A. Yermolayev, the leading lights of the Bolshoi Theatre. The composer was already too ill to take any active part in the work.

This is what Lavrovsky wrote: "The rehearsals began on March 1, 1953. In the afternoon of March 5 I dropped in to see Prokofiev for a few minutes. He was sitting over the orchestral score of the duet of Katerina and Danila. He seemed quite well and was absorbed in his work.... I spent the rest of the day staging the Katerina and Danila duet, and that evening I called up Prokofiev to tell him about it, knowing how interested he was in this duet. Myra Alexandrovna answered the phone (Myra Mendelson-Prokofieva, the composer's wife.—*Ed.*) and in a barely recognizable voice told me that Sergei Sergeyevich was dead."

The Bolshoi Theatre 1954 production of *The Tale of the Stone Flower* was not successful and the ballet had only a short run. Yet it is known that Prokofiev attached great importance to this work—it is the only ballet of mature Prokofiev written on a Russian subject. This determined the vividly national character of the music, its melodiousness and the peculiarities of the dance rhythms. In its expressive musical speech, in

the wealth and variety of its images, both real and fantastic, *The Tale of the Stone Flower* is closer to *Romeo and Juliet* than to the modest *Cinderella.*

Strange as it may seem, Russian national subjects are still awaiting to be embodied in a truly classical ballet.

The Tale of the Stone Flower was produced in Leningrad by the young choreographer Y. Grigorovich with an all-youth cast in 1957. To Leningrad goes the honour of gaining universal recognition for a work which has every right to be considered a classic of Soviet ballet. In 1959 the Bolshoi Theatre duplicated this production of the ballet.

One more prominent Soviet composer to work in the ballet genre in pre-war years was Aram Khachaturyan, at that time the author of several symphonic works. His first essay was the ballet *Happiness* to libretto by G. Ovanesyan on a modern subject, composed in 1939 and produced at the Yerevan Opera and Ballet Theatre for the Ten-Day Festival of Armenian Literature and Art in Moscow.

The sparkling talent and high professional skill of the composer and the vivid national colouring of the music captivated the audience. But the libretto about the life of Armenian collective farmers was somewhat schematic and did not satisfy the composer. The ballet did not stay on the stage but its music was often performed at symphony concerts and over the air.

Three years later, during the war, Khachaturyan incorporated the best items from *Happiness* in *Gayaneh*, a new ballet to libretto by K. Derzhavin. It was first produced at the Leningrad Kirov Theatre in 1942, which at that time was in Perm. Although it contains some episodes from *Happiness*, *Gayaneh* is a perfectly independent work presenting by vivid musical means a theme which was of particular significance in war time.

The action takes place in June 1941, at an Armenian collective farm situated in the mountains close to the state border. The collective farmers' patriotism and their struggle with the enemies of Soviet power are shown alongside the personal drama of Gayaneh whose husband is in league with the enemy. Scenes of peaceful life (carpet-embroidering, cotton-picking) are followed by a lurid scene of the fire started by the enemy; popular festivity with a suite of diverse dances proclaims the happy ending of the strife.

The ballet's driving force is its captivatingly colourful, emotionally rich, profoundly national and tensely symphonic music. It reveals the

inner world of the characters, elucidates the meaning of the events, and paints beautiful pictures of Armenian scenery.

Along with slow and melancholic dances—in the Oriental style—with pronouncedly national melodies ("Cotton-Picking," "Ayesha's Dance," "Gayaneh's Adagio" and "Lullaby," "Carpet-Embroidering," "Dance of Old Men and Women") the ballet has some joyous, impetuous and impassioned Kurd dances ("Sabre Dance"), as well as others that are lucid and joyfully uplifted ("Dance of the Rosy Maidens" and "Dance of Nuneh and Karen").

The profoundly national and imaginative music of *Gayaneh*, fresh and brimming over with vitality has won the ballet a place among the best Soviet works in this genre.

Khachaturyan took many years to write his next ballet. He chose a revolutionary subject from ancient history and set out to give a plastic embodiment to the noble image of Spartacus.

"The time of Spartacus," the composer wrote, "is a fascinating period in the history of mankind. Today, when many of the world's oppressed nations are waging decisive battle for national liberation and independence, the immortal image of Spartacus has acquired particular significance. When I composed the music of my ballet and strove to comprehend the atmosphere of ancient Rome in order to bring to life the pictures of the remote past, I never ceased to feel the spiritual affinity of Spartacus to our own times."

Khachaturyan has remained true to his own spontaneous and full-blooded style and has fortunately withstood the temptation of writing stylized "ancient" music. Utilizing the materials of the historians Plutarch and Appian, the composer and N. Volkov, the librettist, have created a moving, romantically elevated and colourful poem.

The score was completed in 1954 and won immediate recognition. The *Spartacus* Suite has since been a popular concert item. The ballet was first staged at the Kirov Opera and Ballet Theatre in the last days of December 1956 (choreographer A. Yakobson) and its Moscow production at the Bolshoi Theatre took place in March 1958 (choreographer I. Moiseyev).

In 1959 Khachaturyan was awarded a Lenin Prize for this ballet.

Both the music and the dramatic situations in Khachaturyan's new ballet are extremely expressive, tense and elevated. Varied genre scenes evoke the atmosphere of the bubbling life of a motley, multinational Roman crowd. With the daring of a great and original talent

the composer contrasts such widely different scenes as the Bacchanal in Crassus' halls and the heroic struggle of the insurgent slaves, the love scenes between Aegina and Harmodius and gladiators' fights in the circus, the triumph of the Roman conquerors and the slave market. Side by side with the bright and noble characters of Spartacus and his wife Phrygia there are the seductive Aegina and white-livered Harmodius; the shameful and sanguinary episodes of the Roman domination—the crucifixion of the rebellious slaves—are exposed and eternal glory is sung to heroic Spartacus who died for the people.

The composer has been unsparing in his use of vivid and impressive musical media. In conformity with his artistic outlook he has produced a highly realistic, almost tangible, work. One might reproach him for colourist and emotional prodigality (just as Flaubert was reproached for "laying it on too thick" in his *Salammbô*), but the music of *Spartacus* convincingly conveys the heat of the passions and the dramatism of the events presented in that wonderful legend about the gladiators' leader, and there can be no doubt that, like its predecessor, *Gayaneh*, *Spartacus* will rank with the best modern ballets.

Latterly, Soviet ballet music has been enriched by new outstanding works, new brilliant names. In the first place mention should be made of the highly talented Azerbaijan composer Kara Karayev who, in the fifties, has created two ballet scores which may safely be characterized as classical. These are *Seven Beauties* (1952) and *The Path of Thunder* (1957).

The subject of the former ballet enjoying a successful run on the stages of Baku, Leningrad, Lvov, Tashkent, Kuibyshev and other cities, is borrowed from a poem by the Azerbaijan-Iranian classic, Nizami Ganjevi, the libretto is by I. Idayat-Zadeh, Y. Slonimsky and S. Rahman. The composer was attracted by the beauty of the characters and the philosophical depth, as well as the lofty humanist ideals of the poem.

Kara Karayev is a prominent Soviet symphony composer of the middle generation. His music has depth, dramatism, rich melodies and a peculiar beauty stemming from Azerbaijan folk art. Without resorting to folk-lore quotations Karayev can capture the essence of the folk melodies, their unique and complicated rhythmic patterns; he can reproduce in the usual symphony orchestra the colourful timbres of the folk instruments. For all its national originality, Karayev's music preserves the tradition of Russian classical and Soviet symphonism, revealing kinship with Shostakovich and Prokofiev.

The music of *Seven Beauties* entrancingly depicts the various aspects of life of the Azerbaijan people—their work, dances, games, sorrows, joys, sufferings and struggles. The characterization of the gentle and lyrical Ayesha with her pure love for the young Shah Bahram is full of beauty and inspiration. The psychological image of Bahram is complex and contradictory: a pure-minded youth at first, his limitless power makes him a depraved despot. There is a wealth of colour and shading in the music. Along with torrid Oriental langour (the "Adagio of the Most Beautiful," "Dance of the Maghrib Beauty," "Dance of the Courtesans") it contains the pastel transparency of an early morning ("Dawn" in Act I, the "Sorrow Dance" when the women lament their destroyed crops (Act IV) and the acutely sinister characterizations of the villains (the Vizier and his entourage).

The composer makes wide use of symphonically developed folk dance genres in describing various, often highly dramatized, scenes from popular life (the "Dance-Game of Ayesha and Menzer," "Dance with the Horn," "Dance-Wrestling Match of Menzer and Bahram" in Act I, and the extended suites of folk dances in acts II and IV).

To this world of conflicting human passions is counterposed the fantastic, shadowy and alluring world of magic beauties of different nationalities, bringing oblivion to Bahram's sated soul. The fairy-tale world is characterized by a whimsical and enigmatic theme. The composer unfolds before the spectator a brilliant suite of dances of the seven beauties (Indian, Byzantine, Khwarezm, Slav, Maghrib, Chinese and Iranian) closing with a general waltz.

It was clear at once that Karayev was a promising ballet composer. And his new ballet produced at the Kirov Opera and Ballet Theatre early in 1958 furnished proof of this. *The Path of Thunder* is written on the subject of the novel by Peter Abrahams to a libretto by Y. Slonimsky. The composer confidently approached one of the most acute problems of our day and has succeeded in creating a vivid and talented musico-choreographic tragedy.

Karayev took for his motto the words of a character that "love keeps one alive. It makes you understand and fight...." His heroes fight for the dignity of man irrespective of his colour. His music carries one away with its lush colours, wealth of imagination, and masterful handling of the peculiarities of South-African folk-lore (the composer has studied it long and earnestly). The dramatic scenes telling the story of the tragic love of the coloured youth Lanny for Sarie, a

white girl, are imbued with feeling, their music is appealing and highly expressive. The dance suites in acts I and II, forcefully drawing the mighty image of the people, are splendid.

Lanny first appears among his fellow-students. Their dance is youthfully daring and full of confidence in the future. His coming to his native village to work as a teacher becomes a festive occasion. Lanny's characterization acquires new features after his meeting with Sarie. At first the young people try to fight down their feelings, but their second meeting is a real love scene. Their *Adagio* in Act II reveals the various shades of their love: the music, dramatic and excited, becomes lyrical, full of passion and swells into a jubilant paean to love.

The throbbingly tender Lullaby in the finale of Act II depicts the transparent stillness of a warm night and the consummate happiness filling the hearts of Lanny and Sarie.

The colonizers, the enemies of the ballet's heroes, are characterized by grotesque and angular music—the obdurate march of the recruiting agents, the stylized dances of Gert's guests (Act III) and the scene of Mako's beating. Their appearance is accompanied by sharp leitharmonies, the melodies associated with them are markedly harsh, "inhuman." In the ballet's tragic climaxes the music reaches extreme dramatic tension.

Karayev has dedicated his score to the memory of Sergei Prokofiev, and his music has certain stylistic affinity with the principles of that great master. This is quite natural, for with his bold and truly innovatory approach to ballet Prokofiev will long remain a model for all Soviet composers striving to say a new word in this sphere.

An important contribution to Soviet ballet is Alexei Machavariani's *Othello* produced in Tbilisi at the end of 1957 (to libretto by V. Chabukiani who was also the producer and the performer of the title role).

The tragedy of the Moor of Venice has long been interpreted on the Soviet stage in the humanist spirit, in accordance with Alexander Pushkin's words that "Othello is not jealous by nature, on the contrary, he is trustful." His pure and noble soul experiences the tragedy not of jealousy but of shattered faith in truth and justice. While preserving this principal idea and the plot, the composer and the librettist focussed their attention on those aspects which lent themselves best to choreographic expression. To realize this they chose two methods.

First, many of the events merely mentioned in Shakespeare's text, are *shown* in the ballet. This is particularly true of the beginning where it is most important to reveal all the motives for future actions: for instance, there is a scene in which Othello appoints Cassio his lieutenant, thereby arousing Iago's resentment. Othello's account of his meeting with Desdemona, of his telling her the story of his life and of their love (Act I) is presented in a choreographic suite built up on the principle of fading-out shots.

Secondly, prominence is given to the *positive, the bright side*, emphasizing the love of Othello and Desdemona and their happiness. This inspired poem of love develops from the opening scene between Othello and Desdemona, the marriage scene, the *Adagio* closing Othello's story and finally the concluding *Adagio* of Act I with its sweeping symphonic development (after the scene at the Senate). The theme of happiness and jubilation is presented with particular fulness in Othello's Moorish Dance at the end of Act II (in the middle of a grand joyous *divertissement*), in the Cyprus scene.

Machavariani's music is dramatic, temperamental and pronouncedly national. His melodies reveal an unmistakable kinship with the supple and expressive Georgian songs, which is particularly true of his lyrical cantilena, such as the exalted and spiritualized melody in the wedding scene, where, incidentally, the composer has utilized the melody of his romance "Prayer" to words by D. Guramishvili; the romantic "love theme," and the stirringly tender, transparent and fragile theme of Desdemona.

His harmonies and certain aspects of his idiom, too, betray much that is original or stemming from the folk sources, such as, for instance, the pungent chords constructed on the fourth and the fifth in the accompaniment of Brabantio's theme in Act I. The brilliant fanfare, the "power" theme associated with the Republic of Venice, the Senate and Othello's high office, contains skilfully transformed texture and harmonic features of "Krimanchuli"—the song genre of a Georgian tribe with improvised collateral parts in a high register. And this is not the only folk source to be traced in the ballet.

More important, however, is the *method* of using folk-lore elements in the ballet's dramaturgy. A typical example of this is the introduction of "Khorumi" rhythm, a warlike men's dance in five-four time, and of an old national form of wrestling *Sachidao* into the scene of battle against the Turks (Act I, Othello's story). The "barbarian" colour of

these Georgian themes is perfectly in place here. The introduction of the "Khorumi" rhythm in the climax—the strangling of Desdemona—where it serves as the basis for a long symphonic episode with tempestuously developing and transforming main themes, pursues a different aim. Here this peculiar rhythm lends extra tensity and poignancy to the music, and a national feature becomes a means of conveying an idea of universal human appeal.

The theme associated with Othello is broad, virile and innately noble, while Iago's theme is stealthy and disquieting, and seemingly self-effacing. All these qualities are in perfect accord with Iago's character.

In the musical dramaturgy and the individual characterizations Machavariani followed the path laid by Prokofiev and succeeded in making his music capture the impetuous drive of the course of events in its rushing symphonic development, resulting in the musical images which live and evolve with the rapidly unfolding tragic plot.

The production of *Othello* at the Tbilisi Opera and Ballet Theatre was a major event of Soviet musical and theatrical life. Vakhtang Chabukiani, the performer of the title role, has been awarded a Lenin Prize.

Nikolai Peiko has written very good music (also in the Prokofiev tradition!) and in excellent taste, for the ballet *Joan of Arc* to libretto by N. Volkov after Schiller. The ballet, the work of a real master, was produced at the end of 1957 by V. Burmeister at the Stanislavsky and Nemirovich-Danchenko Musical Theatre in Moscow. Besides presenting the gentle, exalted and spiritualized character of the heroine and drawing colourful genre pictures (the dances of peasants, courtiers, the coronation scene at Reims), the music truthfully reproduces the historical atmosphere: the gloomy Middle Ages with the smoking fires of the Inquisition, the fanaticism of the Catholic church and the cruel and devastating Hundred Years' War. The symphonically developed music characterizing an epoch full of dramatism and exalted, if austere, sorrow, from the start foretells the high—and tragic—destiny of the people's heroine who saves France and loses her life at the stake.

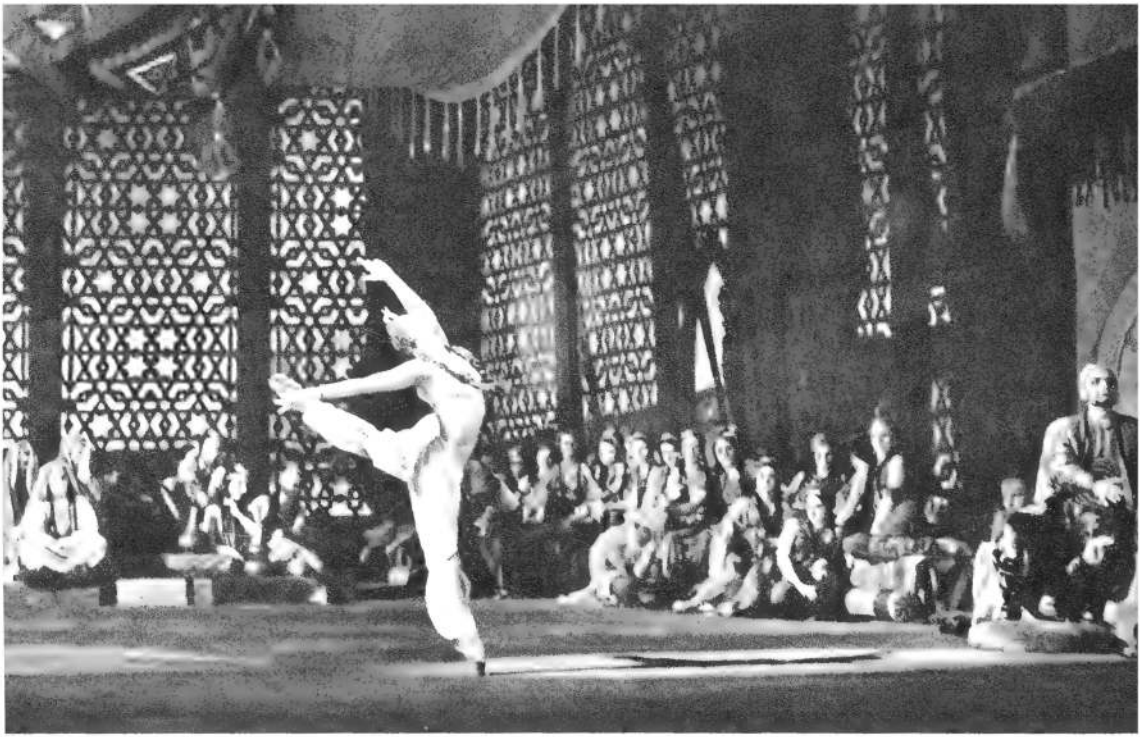
Solovyov-Sedoi's ballet *Taras Bulbà* (libretto by S. Kaplan and R. Zakharov after Gogol) has a successful run at the Kirov Opera and Ballet Theatre in Leningrad. The first version of the ballet was staged as early as 1940; for the present, 1955, production, it has been drastically revised.

Reinhold Glière

RED FLOWER, ballet by R. Glière staged by the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow, 1945

Dance with an umbrella performed by Galina Ulanova

Sailors' dance "Yablochko" from act I



M. Plisetskaya as Zarema, P. Gusev as Khan Girei

LAURENCIA, ballet by A. Krein staged by the Bolshoi Theatre Moscow, 1955
M. Plisetskaya as Laurencia, V. Chabukiani as Frondozo

THE FOUNTAIN OF BAKHCHISARAI, ballet by B. Asafyev staged by the Bolshoi Theatre. Moscow, 1954.

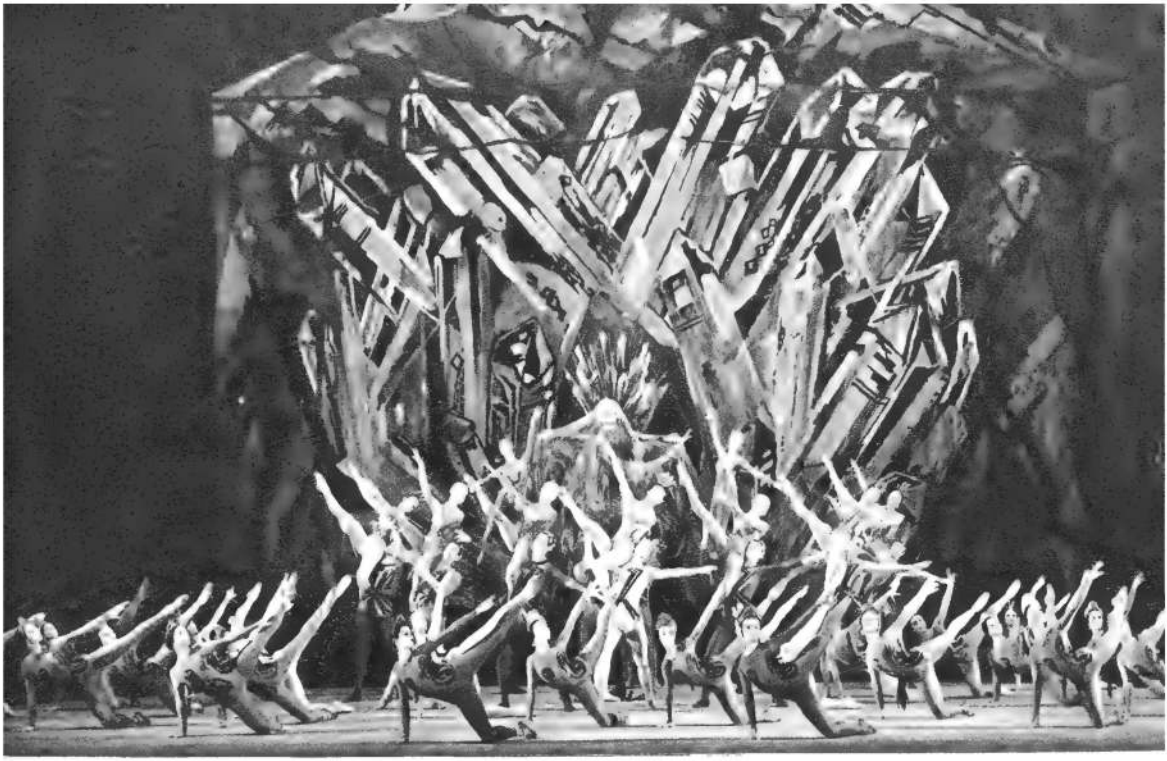
G. Ulanova as Maria, P. Gusev as Khan Girei

Scene from B. Asafyev's ballet THE FLAME OF PARIS staged by the Bolshoi Theatre. Moscow, 1951

Scene from act I. Left to right: A. Yermolayev as Tybalt, I. Olenina as Nurse, G. Ulanova as Juliet, Y. Zhdanov as Romeo

ROMEO AND JULIET, ballet by S. Prokofiev staged by the Bolshoi Theatre. Moscow, 1947

Duel scene from act II. In the foreground: A. Yermolayev as Tybalt, S. Koren as Mercutio, Y. Zhdanov as Romeo



Dance of crystals

THE STONE FLOWER, ballet by S. Prokofiev staged by the Bolshoi Theatre. Moscow, 1959

V. Levashov as Severyan, N. Timofeyeva as Mistress of the Copper Mountain

Girls' dance

GAYANEH, ballet by A. Khachaturyan staged by the Bolshoi Theatre Moscow, 1957

Sabre dance

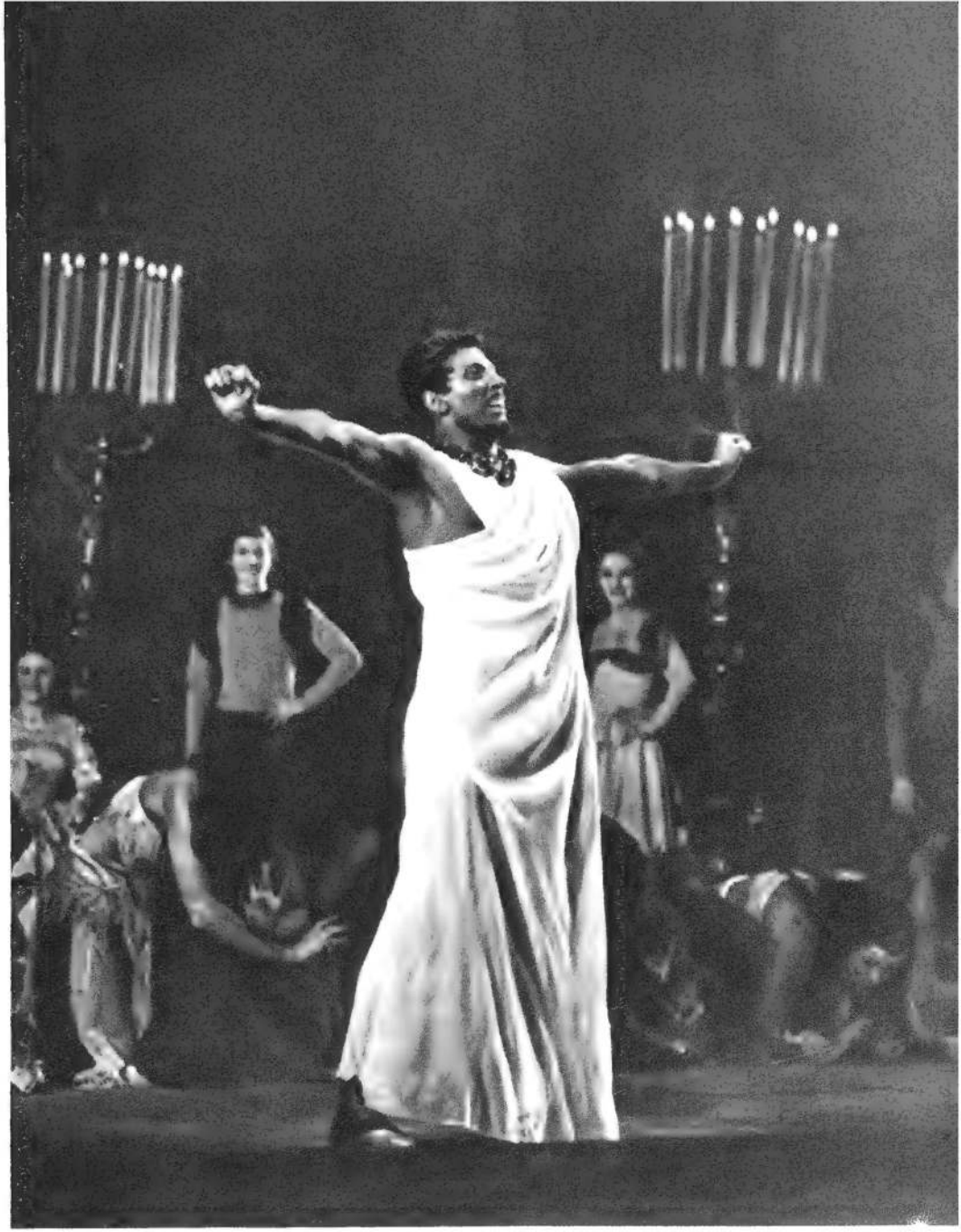
SPARTACUS, ballet by A. Khachaturyan

Scene from act III. In the centre A. Makarov as Spartacus. (The Kirov Opera and Ballet Theatre in Leningrad, 1956)

Scene from act III. M. Plisetskaya as Aegina, N. Fadeyechev as Harmodius. (The Bolshoi Theatre. Moscow, 1958)

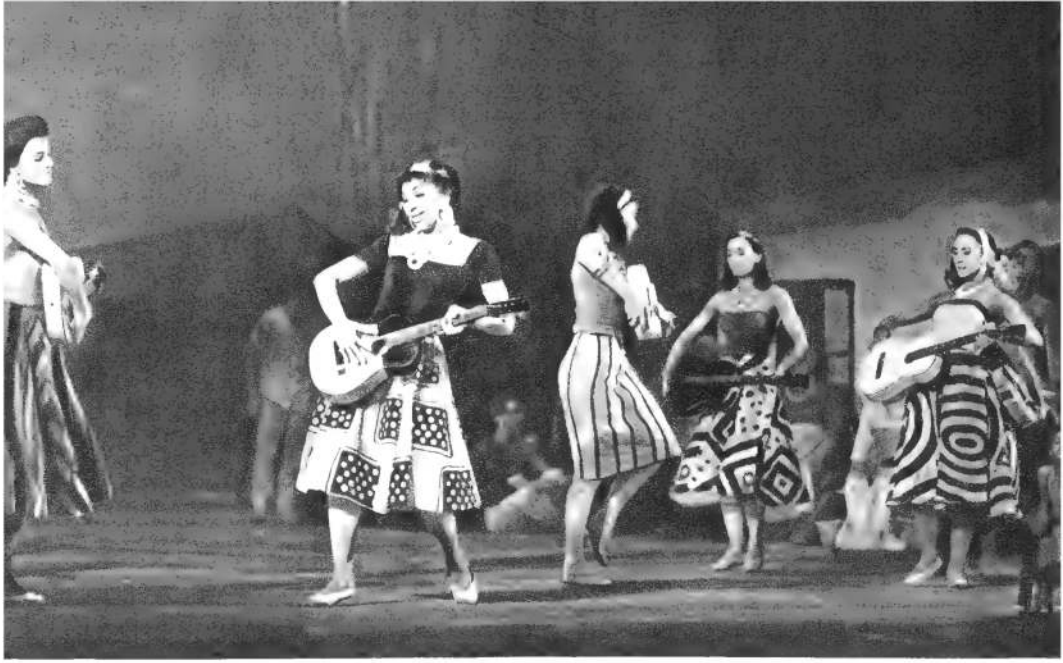
JOAN OF ARC, ballet by N. Peiko staged by the Stanislavsky and Nemirovich-Danchenko Musical Theatre. Moscow, 1958. Scene from act I. In the centre V. Bovt as Joan

OTHELLO, ballet by A. Machavariani staged by the Georgian Opera and Ballet Theatre in Tbilisi, 1958



V. Chabukiani—Othello—performs "Moorish Dance" from act II

Final episode of the "Turkish Dance" (Othello's story from act I) with V. Chabukiani as Othello



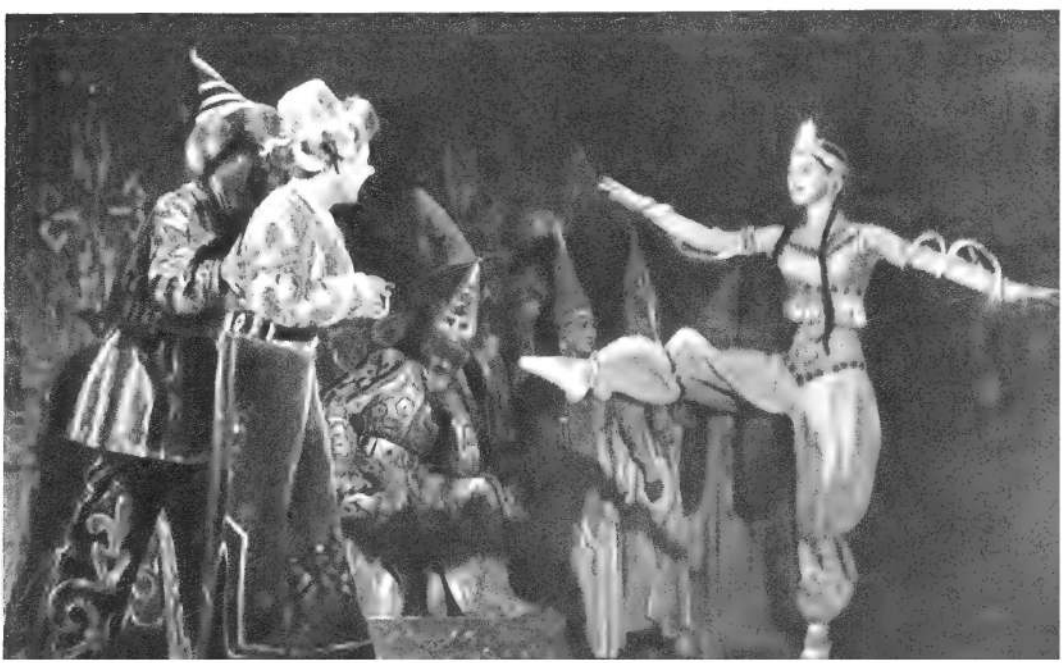
Dance of coloured girls from act I

THE PATH OF THUNDER, ballet by Kara Karayev staged by the Bolshoi Theatre. Moscow, 1959

Dances of slaves in the house of Gert from act II

SEVEN BEAUTIES, ballet by Kara Karayev staged by the Akhundov Opera and Ballet Theatre. Baku, 1953. Adagio of Ayesha and Bahram from act I. L. Vekilova as Ayesha, Y. Kuznetsov as Bahram

Scene from the ballet CHOLPON by M. Raukhverger staged by the Kirghiz Opera and Ballet Theatre. Frunze, 1958



SHURALEH, ballet by F. Yarullin staged by the Bolshoi Theatre. Moscow, 1955. Left to right: V. Levashov as Shuraleh, Y. Kondratov as Batyr, M. Plisetskaya as Suimbikeh

GOLDSPINNERS, ballet by E. Kapp in the Estonian Academic Opera and Ballet Theatre
Scene from act I. T. Rondviir as Mesliike, J. Silla as Julo

The music is simple, melodious and easily assimilated, its naturally flowing and plastic melodies revealing the master of song. The heroic struggle of the Ukrainian Cossacks against the Polish nobles and the Jesuits in the 16th and 17th centuries is shown in a series of grand and brilliant dance scenes. The characteristics of the Poles are less happy; their dances are conventional and the characterization of *Pannochka* (the Young Lady) is done through the media of traditional classical dance, foreign to the composer's personality and, consequently, also conventional. The music in the climaxes is purely illustrative, especially in the scene where Andrei is killed and where the themes from the preceding acts are heard, while the final apotheosis does not follow logically from the chain of events.

However, the melodious music in the Ukrainian scenes, the inventive staging (choreographer B. Fenster), and the participation of excellent dancers have made the ballet an attractive performance.

Only a few ballets on modern themes that appeared in the non-Russian republics have made a permanent place for themselves in the repertoire. For the most part they deal with life in the country, with poetic scenery and national customs and rites presented in appealing dances, such as, for instance, *Sevan* by Yegiazaryan, *Gülshen* by S. Gajibekov, *Dilbar* by A. Lensky. Among the ballets dealing with the heroic deeds of our days, with the Soviet patriots' struggle against internal and external enemies, there are A. Spadavecchia's *The Happy Coast*, D. Toradze's *For Peace*, J. Juseliunas' *On the Seashore* and E. Aramyan's *Sona*.

The greatest—and most significant—part of the ballets performed (or being rehearsed) on the Soviet stage are based on folk-lore legends, historical subjects or those taken from great literary works. To the latter belong S. Balasanyan's *Leili and Mejnun* on the subject of Nizami's immortal poem; the talented work *Tiina* by Lydia Auster after the poem *Werewolf* by the Estonian classic A. Kitzberg; *The Sakta of Freedom* by the Lettish composer A. Skulte after J. Rainis's play *I Played and Danced*. All of them have been performed with success in Moscow during the ten-day festivals of national art in 1955-57. The ballets on fairy-tale subjects are E. Kapp's *Kalevipoeg* and *Goldspinners* (Estonia), E. Oganesyan's *Marmar* (Armenia), D. Toradze's *Gorda* and S. Tsintsadze's *Treasure of the Blue Mountain* (Georgia), and F. Yarullin's *Shuraleh* (Tataria).

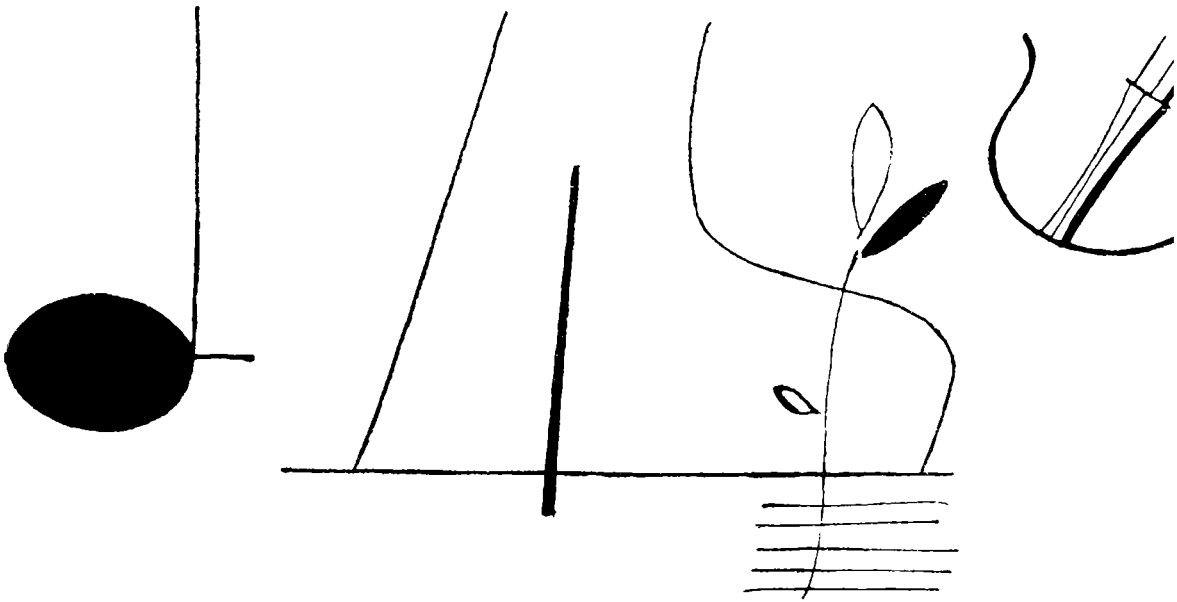
We would like to make particular mention of Sergei Balasanyan's

Leili and Mejnun to libretto by S. Tsenin. The legend of the true and tragic love of Leili and Mejnun is one of the most popular in the East. This talented Armenian composer, who has devoted many years of his life to the development of Tajik music, based his ballet on the version of the legend used in Nizami's poem. He has created a splendid, highly dramatic score in which genuine folk melodies play a prominent part especially in genre scenes (the festivity, the wedding, the battle); he finds tender and expressive colours to draw the poetic portrait of Leili and presents her character in development (the joy of meeting her beloved, her unswerving decision to remain true to him, the sorrow of parting, despair). The theme of Kais (nicknamed *Mejnun*—love-crazed) is related to Leili's, and this enables the composer to combine them in a variety of ways thereby revealing the feelings of the young lovers. The ballet's climax is the final scene where Leili, cast into prison by a cruel father, with all hope gone of ever seeing her beloved, stabs herself. Just at that moment Mejnun appears, succeeding at last in making his way into the prison, and Leili dies in his arms, happy that he is with her. Mejnun stabs himself with her dagger. The lucid music in this scene glorifies the triumph of true love over death.

We would like to say in conclusion that Soviet ballet is developing in a way particularly its own, differing greatly from the trend dominant in modern West-European ballet. Extensive compositions in several acts are the prevailing form, enabling the composer to show the characters and situations in development, to create grand heroic and epic works or exquisite lyrico-psychological dramas. Hence the combination of pantomime and dance, of folk genre and national dance techniques with the classical dance, of *divertissement* and relevant plot.

Soviet ballet has many new and original works to its credit and it holds a brilliant promise for the future.

CHAMBER MUSIC



1. INSTRUMENTAL

In the years immediately following the October Revolution, when the entire country was swayed by mass movements of tremendous scope, instrumental chamber music enjoyed little popularity. This type of music seemed to be the least accordant with the great upheavals of the times. Songs and choral works ranked first in significance; somewhat later, symphonies, oratorios and operas came to be recognized, while chamber ensembles, sonatas and short instrumental pieces—more intimate and concise genres—long remained in the shade. Nothing new was observed in these forms, which went on repeating what had already been achieved in the quartets of Taneyev and Glazunov and the sonatas and preludes of Scriabin.

Among the compositions written in those early post-revolutionary years mention should be made of Nikolai Myaskovsky's Third and Fourth piano sonatas (1920 and 1923).

The moods and emotions of Myaskovsky the symphonist are present in his sonatas. As in his symphonies, the music of the Third and Fourth sonatas is tragic and passionate, with a tremendous inner driving force. Contrasting with this world of dramatic conflict, there are fragile and bright dream-like images. The Fourth Sonata in C minor, a turbulent and tempestuous work, is especially noteworthy. Boris Asafyev wrote that the first movement is pathetic in the Beethoven and Michelangelo sense of the word. Its colour is that of wild and rugged romantic land-

scapes; its movement is that of low heavy clouds portending a thunderstorm and a tempest. The lyrical piano miniatures such as "Whimsies" (1917-22), "The Yellowed Pages" (1928) and "Reminiscences" (1928) are distinguished by psychological depth and reveal a keen observant mind. They are not tone pictures evoking concrete visual images but rather fleeting moods and impressions captured in music. The melodies of many of the pieces are related to Russian folk songs, for instance, "A Ditty" and "Lullaby."

Simultaneously with Myaskovsky the chamber genres were cultivated by Anatoly Alexandrov and Samuil Feinberg.

Sergei Prokofiev made a valuable contribution to the music of the period by his "Old Granny's Tales" (1918) and "Overture on Hebrew Themes" for clarinet, two violins, viola, violoncello and piano (1919). Although composed in New York, these works (particularly the poetic piano pieces) show Prokofiev as a wholly Russian composer. With their wealth of appealing songful melodies, these lyrico-epic pieces unfold before the listener the child-like and naive world of fairy-tales.

The "Overture on Hebrew Themes" is a further continuation of the Orient-in-Russian-music tradition. The composer makes use of genuine Hebrew melodies to create a witty, typically Prokofievian work, combining lyricism and grotesquerie.

Chamber music of the second half of the twenties was adversely influenced by two groups, opposed to each other and occupying a very prominent place in musical life.

In their fight for a "proletarian music" the theoreticians of the RAPM and *Prokoll* rejected instrumental music and cultivated "mass" and choral songs to the exclusion of everything else. Under their influence some composers gave up writing music without words altogether. The adherents of the AMM, on the other hand, while advocating "modern art" directed the composers towards formal experiment, abstract originality. As examples of this pseudo-innovation we may cite the "constructivist" sonatas by A. Mosolov, N. Roslavets's and L. Polovinkin's pieces and young Dmitry Shostakovich's *Aphorisms* written in 1927.

But in his cycle of 24 Preludes (1932-33) Shostakovich was already overcoming the excesses of this "ultra-Left" trend, and side by side with stylistically-uneven and emphatically grotesque pieces the cycle contains such true gems as the elegantly-whimsical Prelude in C sharp minor and the grand and tragic Prelude in E flat minor (the latter contains the elements of the symphonic *Adagios* of mature Shostakovich).

The same years saw the appearance of Myaskovsky's four string quartets opus 33 and the chamber music pieces of young Aram Khachaturyan—Trio for piano, violin and clarinet on Oriental themes (1932), *Poem* (1927) and *Toccata* (1932) for piano. The last-named composition has remained popular to this day.

And yet the true revival of Russian chamber music and the shaping of the new, Soviet style in this sphere began not in the early thirties but in the years immediately before the war—1939-41. It was then that the traits of a definite style began to appear in Soviet chamber music: psychological truth without undue sophistication, lucid and expressive melodies, utilization of the folk-lore wealth. A number of talented works were born, destined to outlive their time and lay the foundation for Soviet chamber music repertoire.

Much of the credit goes to Myaskovsky who again turned to quartets in 1939.

His Fifth Quartet (E minor) with its serious and yet spontaneously lyrical music, a fresh and fascinating work in the style of Russian drawn-out song, took the composer long to complete and cost him a great deal of effort. Its poetic, deep and translucent first movement, what the composer himself termed a "serene" *Allegro*, was the result of agonized searchings on his part. He was not satisfied until he achieved this wise and mature tranquillity in expressing the mood of "tense meditation"; then he added the first movement to the other three (*Scherzo*, *Andantino* and *Finale*) previously completed.

In the words of the musicologist Ivan Martynov, "Myaskovsky's Fifth Quartet marks the complete artistic maturity of Soviet chamber music, a stage when we may speak of a perfect expression of the new aesthetic ideal."

Myaskovsky's Sixth Quartet (1940), composed immediately after the Fifth, is more dramatic and contains sharp contrasts. Its gentle and elegiac first movement (*Moderato con anima*) is followed by a witty "toy" march (*Burlesco*); the third movement, a sorrowful and introspective *Andante lugubre* with a subtitle "Melancholy," throbs with concentrated emotion; after it comes a light and animated *Rondo*, in which the composer seems to dismiss gloomy subjective moods and to welcome joy and life.

Of the three quartets composed by Myaskovsky during the war years the Ninth (D minor, 1944) is of the greatest artistic value. It continues the line of the Fifth and Sixth quartets but on a broader, "epic"

plane. The well elaborated, concise and vigorous first movement (*Allegro inquieto*), and, particularly, the splendid second with a stirring melody in the violin, suddenly followed by a fantastically-mysterious rustling of the *Scherzo*, and then a grand and majestic finale—are all vivid, novel and brilliant.

Myaskovsky's last chamber music works are the Second Sonata for cello and piano (1948) dedicated to Mstislav Rostropovich, a modest and heart-warming work, expressing its ideas with extreme clarity and precision, and the Thirteenth Quartet (A minor, 1949), which, as well as his Twenty-Seventh Symphony, proved the composer's swan song and was performed posthumously. Its four movements may be regarded as striking the balance of long searchings. One hears the moving lyrical melodies in the style of the Fifth and Sixth quartets, and notes a brevity stemming from the Ninth. But it was no repetition, and Myaskovsky, who persistently strove for progress, remained to the end an original and searching artist.

Prokofiev, too, has made a sizable contribution to Soviet chamber music, although ensembles held less appeal for him than sonatas for piano or for piano and violin.

The determining quality of Prokofiev's piano compositions is their anti-romanticism. "Neither the charms of impressionism nor the temptations of Scriabin affected him," writes Heinrich Neuhaus, the well-known pianist. "He was ever a stranger to both sensuous refinement and transcendental contemplativeness. He was clear-headed and sober-minded—there was nothing obscure, nothing of the mystic about him. His music is earthy in the best and most human sense of the word; it seems to be saying: life is a wonderful, complex and fascinating affair, there is no need to try to escape from it, let us make it more interesting still!"

Prokofiev's early piano compositions, including his sonatas (from lst to 4th) show an original combination of fresh and novel harmonies and polyphonic devices with the methods characteristic of early 17th and 18th century classicism; the latter are apparent not only in outright stylizations—gavottes, minuets and rigadoons—but also in piano texture and rhythmic patterns.

A distinguishing characteristic of mature Prokofiev is the deepening of the original lyrical element, which is patently manifest also in his later piano sonatas. Suffice it to mention the broad and lucid, "cloudless" lyrical slow movement of his Seventh Sonata (1942), the *Alle-*

Trio by D. Shostakovich performed at the Small Hall of the Moscow Conservatoire.
On the stage: David Oistrakh (violin), Svyatoslav Knushevitsky (cello); the composer at the piano

Pianist Svyatoslav Richter

Pianist Tatyana Nikolayeva

Above: D. Shostakovich and the Borodin Quartet. Left to right: Valentin Berlinsky (cello), Dmitry Shebalin (viola), Dmitry Shostakovich Yaroslav Alexandrov (2nd violin) and Rostislav Dubinsky (1st violin)

Below: The Beethoven Quartet. Left to right: Vadim Borisovsky (viola), Dmitry Tsyganov (1st violin), Sergei Shirinsky (cello), Vasily Shirinsky (2nd violin)

Leonid Kogan (violin) and Emil Gilels (piano) performing in the Beethoven Concert Hall (Moscow)

gretto and Waltz (2nd and 3rd movements) of his Sixth Sonata (1940), the songful (in the Schubertian sense) middle movement of the Eighth Sonata (1944). The energetic and active element which also attained full development in Prokofiev's mature works, becomes in his later sonatas a mighty volitional drive, impetuous dynamics (finale of the Seventh, the first and last movements of the Eighth sonatas). True, sometimes this drive becomes overbearing, but there are passages where it is poignantly dramatic.

Prokofiev's Ninth—and last—Sonata (1947) is dedicated to the outstanding Soviet pianist Svyatoslav Richter, its first performer (1951), who had also been the first to perform the Sixth and Seventh sonatas. The Ninth is a lyrical and philosophical work, its expressive media austere and modest; it may have been done in water-colours. The Tenth Sonata, which Prokofiev began in 1953, was destined to be unfinished.

Prokofiev is the author of several violin sonatas. One of them was originally composed for flute and was later re-written for violin; the other (in F minor, marked No. 1) is imbued with concentrated, profound and inexpressibly beautiful Prokofievian lyricism, especially the first and third movements. Composed in 1938, the sonata was revised by Prokofiev in 1946 and dedicated to David Oistrakh, its first and best performer. The violinist recalls Prokofiev's advice as he was studying the sonata: "He made suggestions concerning both the character of the movement and the inner meaning of the music itself. For instance, about one part of the first movement where the violin plays passages running up and down the scale, he said that it should sound 'like the wind in a graveyard.' After remarks of this kind the whole spirit of the sonata assumed a deeper significance for us. Never have I been so completely absorbed in a piece of music. Until the first public performance I could play nothing else, think of nothing else."

The end of the thirties and the early forties—the period which we have already indicated as the turning point in the process of formation of Soviet chamber instrumental style, produced not only the mature works of Myaskovsky and Prokofiev but also the first outstanding chamber scores by younger masters: the Third, Fourth and Fifth quartets of V. Shebalin and the First Quartet and Piano Quintet of D. Shostakovich.

Shebalin's quartets are distinguished for their general seriousness of mood, excellent taste and craftsmanship. The melodies are plastic and expressive, and in his Fifth (*Slav*) Quartet—imbued with feeling and

expression. This quartet is based on folk themes skilfully transformed, enriched with vivid harmonies and elaborate texture. The composer has succeeded in capturing the lyricism and dance element so characteristic of Slav music. The broad and melancholic *Andante* (2nd movement) makes one think of the romance of Russia's vast expanses, and the lyrical episodes of Chaikovsky's works; the festive and joyous finale blends the dance and song melodies into a vivid whole rich in inner contrasts.

Shostakovich's string quartets, piano quintet and trio deserve a chapter to themselves in the history of Soviet chamber music. So far Shostakovich has written six quartets, but no one can be sure that by the time this book comes out the figure will not be increased. The composer has been working in the sphere of chamber music not less persistently than in the genre of symphony. It would be both interesting and instructive to draw a comparison between his works in different genres. As a rule his quartets are related to his other works of the same period. For instance, the Fourth Quartet and the vocal cycle *From Jewish Folk Poetry* (1948-49) have melodic elements and whole themes in common. A similar dramatic conception (five-movement cycle with the last three movements expressing the leading idea performed without a pause) is present in the Eighth and Ninth symphonies and the Third Quartet (1943-46). Serenity, brightness and lucidity are common to the Sixth Quartet and the romances to lyrics by Y. Dolmatovsky (1956). Such parallels, proving the unity of Shostakovich's style, his being "obsessed" by creative ideas which found an outlet in works of different genres written approximately at one and the same time, could be continued further. Occasionally, however, the common factor in works composed in close succession is contrast!

That is what happened at the end of the thirties. The charming, elegant and playful First Quartet served as a sort of creative relaxation between the Fifth and Sixth symphonies and their ideological relative—the Piano Quintet.

The First Quartet (1938) is one of the earliest "neoclassical" works of Shostakovich who later often revealed a leaning towards the two dissimilar elements of the 18th-century classical music—the Haydn and the Bach trends. There is plenty of Haydn's carefree gaiety in the First Quartet (finale), and the dance element (*Moderato*) and the variation principle (2nd movement) play a prominent part. The ominous rustlings in the fantastic *Scherzo* (3rd movement) do not interfere with

the beauty, elegance, humour and sparkling sunniness of this piece. Nevertheless the First Quartet is but the initial step in Shostakovich's chamber music, an episode least of all characteristic of his style. It was followed by such important works as the Piano Quintet (1940), Piano Trio (1944), the Second (1944) and the Third (1946) quartets, which present the unfolding of Shostakovich's original chamber style.

The Piano Quintet, a profound, truly mature and lucid work, is one of Shostakovich's masterpieces. The austere and impressive character of the first two movements (*Prelude* and *Fugue*) brings them close to Bach. The solemn introductory *Lento* is followed by a broad lyrical melody in the viola (the *Prelude*'s middle episode *Poco più mosso*); the *Fugue* develops the same musical ideas in a new way (its subject is related to the first theme of the *Prelude*), deepening their philosophical content and creating a mood of contemplation.

A striking contrast is provided by the witty, unassuming and brilliant *Scherzo* (the third movement), breaking in abruptly and filling everything with its unbounded joyousness. This is a picture painted with broad brush strokes, full of life, bringing to mind the art of the Flemish masters.

The gravity of the fourth movement (*Intermezzo*) makes it kin with the first two parts, although here the music is warmer, movingly tender, gentle and lyrical. It prepares the listener for the joyful, bright and bubbling finale, the harmonious solution of all the searchings and aspirations of the foregoing movements.

The impulse to write a piano trio was given to Shostakovich by a grievous loss—the death of his close friend Ivan Sollertinsky (1944), an outstanding Soviet music scholar. The trio is dedicated to his memory. But the content of the music, composed in the trying war years, exceeds the limits of personal sorrow: it deals with the tragedy of the loss of many lives, a tragedy that found a response in every heart at that time.

The meditative, typically Russian melody of the *Andante* (first movement) is unfolded unhurriedly; it develops polyphonically with new and new parts added to it. At first it is heard in cello harmonics, in a very high register, next comes the violin *sul G* and, finally, the same theme is stated in the muffled bass register of the piano. This songful and sad music is developed further, becoming tensely dramatic in the subsequent *Moderato*. The lively and torrential *Scherzo* comes as a contrast, but the sorrowful mood once more gains the upper hand.

The *Largo* (*Chaconne*, third movement) is a thoughtful, restrainedly dolorous dialogue between the violin and the cello against the scant background of chords from the piano.

The finale (*Allegretto*) steals upon the listener, taking him by surprise. Its grotesquely picturesque and vivid melodies are threateningly sinister, in the nature of a *danse macabre* (suggesting a parallel with the "Invasion Episode" from the Seventh or with the ominous *Presto* from the Eighth symphonies). The music suddenly breaks off on a frightful and harsh climax, and then, from the muted violin come the agitated strains of the sad *Andante* theme. This eminently human theme rings as the expression of inconsolable sorrow, as a speech pronounced over a fresh grave amid the raging hostile elements. The trio ends with a gentle echo of the grotesque theme associated with the forces of evil.

Shostakovich's Second Quartet deals with an entirely different aspect of life. It presents bright genre pictures. The quartet, first performed together with the trio on November 9, 1944, consists of four movements contrary to accepted practice. These are the *Overture*, *Recitative and Romance*, *Valse*, and *Theme with Variations*. Its best episodes are the poetic genre scenes—the *Romance* and the *Valse*, as well as the charmingly diversified and inventive variations on a theme in the style of a Russian folk song.

It has already been mentioned that the Third Quartet is related to Shostakovich's symphonic works of the mid-forties. The succession of its contrasting movements produces a powerful impression. It is particularly true of the sorrowful, intensely dramatic dialogue coming after the impetuous fury of the sweeping *Scherzo*, and of the gentle, as if resigned, finale, a calm after the storm.

Among the rest of Shostakovich's six quartets the Sixth (1956) is distinguished for its originality. It is an uncommonly lucid composition, breathing the atmosphere of happiness. A single mood and common melodic material are present in all of its four movements—*Allegretto*, *Scherzo*, *Passacaglia* and finale—*Rondo*.

The pastoral mood and tender lyricism of the first movement are continued naturally in the pure and bright, nocturne-like *Scherzo*, the musing *Passacaglia* resembling a Russian song, and the caressingly gentle *Rondo*.

The cycle of piano preludes and fugues (1951) stands apart in Shostakovich's chamber-music output. Arousing heated arguments when it

first appeared, with time the cycle gained an honourable place in the repertoire of leading Soviet pianists (S. Richter, E. Gilels, T. Nikolayeva, M. Grinberg, and others). The cycle of 24 preludes and fugues is a tribute to Shostakovich's beloved Johann Sebastian Bach. While making use of Bach's principles of polyphony, Shostakovich has composed essentially modern music, true to his own style. In the highly varied preludes and fugues, some full of energy and vigour, others tragic and sad, and still others concentrated and optimistic, one occasionally glimpses melodic elements of Russian folk songs, and yet sometimes the expressive media are angular and harsh. This has given cause to those who dislike Shostakovich's music to speak of his "formalist tendencies not overcome." But concert practice shows that these interesting and original pieces can hold their own; the number of opponents is dwindling and of those who like the cycle growing. The future will show how strong are the positions of Shostakovich's Preludes and Fugues.

Lack of space prevents us from mentioning here all of the ensemble works and piano compositions by Soviet composers. We must, however, point out a characteristic general trend.

The last decade has brought Soviet music a host of new names. The young composers of the multinational Soviet country have made a large contribution to Soviet music, including the sphere of chamber compositions. While adhering to a certain extent to the traditions cultivated by their teachers and the Russian classics, the young composers are at the same time seeking new ways, enriching chamber music with fresh national melodies and rhythms and programme themes. As a result Soviet chamber music has broadened out as it were, and become much more varied.

Arno Babajanyan, an Armenian composer and talented pianist, distinguished himself at the composers' contest of the First Democratic Youth and Student Festival held in Prague in 1947, where his piano miniatures—*Prelude*, *Toccata*, and *Vagarshapat Dance* won him a second prize. His greatest contribution to Soviet chamber music, however, is his dramatic Trio for piano, violin and cello (1953). Its musical idiom is very original and markedly national, containing harmonies, rhythms and modes characteristic of Armenian folk music. At the same time the Russian classical tradition is preserved, particularly the piano style of Rachmaninov. The austere and tragic theme of the in-

troduction runs through the three movements of the trio, giving the music dynamism and sharpening the conflicts.

The turbulent and *pathétique Allegro*, the *Andante* glorifying the beauty and poetry of life with its flowing improvisatory melody, the energetic and driving finale in changing time—all contain a wealth of imagination, melodic inventiveness and spontaneous emotionality.

The Georgian composer Sulkhan Tsintsadze's works are distinguished by national originality and elegance. The talented youth's interest in chamber music is quite natural, because he is a good cellist and for several years was a member of the State Georgian String Quartet. As a student of the composition department at the Moscow Conservatoire, Tsintsadze won recognition with his three quartets (1947, 1949 and 1950), two cycles of miniature genre pieces for string quartet and pieces for cello and piano.

Tsintsadze's quartets (in particular, the Second in D major and the Third in C major) reveal brilliant craftsmanship and sense of modernity, their music is unaffected and pronouncedly Georgian. Genre dance and song episodes in which folk melodies are used with skill, are among the composer's happiest finds. The fascinating lyrical episodes of his quartets, too, are based on folk musical elements. Tsintsadze is not against using genuine folk melodies, as for instance, in his cycles of quartet and cello pieces. His arrangements of them are stylistically faultless and colourful, and he can make the string quartet sound like Georgian folk instruments.

Tsintsadze's Fourth String Quartet won him a silver medal at the international contest of young composers at the Sixth Youth and Students Festival in Moscow in 1957. This lyrico-dramatic work perhaps lacks the spontaneity of his earlier compositions, but is none the less brilliant and shows the composer's growing mastery, maturity and ability to write purposefully. The secondary theme of the first movement is particularly attractive.

The talented Russian composer Herman Galynin to whose creative development a grave mental disorder put a sudden and untimely end, worked in the same direction of enriching chamber music by national melodic elements. Although somewhat contradictory stylistically, his two string quartets (1947 and 1956), piano pieces and piano trio (1948) reveal a sparkling talent, a persistent urge to develop national Russian elements in his music (third movement from the First Quartet and the two slow movements of the Second Quartet) and a melodic style all

his own (*Aria* from a piano suite), as well as a penchant for the humorous and genre characterizations (the *scherzo*-like episodes from the Second Quartet).

The quartet by Arkady Filippenko written in 1947 and dedicated to hero-partisans is an outstanding event in Ukrainian chamber music. Its programme has determined the character of the music based on Ukrainian folk-song elements. The first movement depicts the dynamics of fighting, the second is a lyrical musing about one's native land, the third (*Scherzo*) represents the joyful meeting of peasants and partisans, and the fourth speaks of hard-won victory. This simple and melodious composition was warmly welcomed by the audiences.

Mention should be made of the talented, although as yet somewhat immature, young Russian composer, Andrei Volkonsky, the author of a piano quintet (1956). A melodious work, it has the listener under its spell from the first bars of its broad principal theme in the Russian style, which comes close to the restrainedly epic moods of Borodin and Prokofiev. The placid and contemplative chorale—the secondary theme—has melodic elements in common with old Russian chants. The *scherzo*-like *Burlesque* (second movement) is perky and boisterous, one of its themes is like a balalaika tune. The final fugue is an excellent effort, with its driving and clear-cut theme and brilliant coda based on the main—epic—theme of the first movement. The third movement—*Passacaglia*—is the least successful owing to extreme complexity and an attempt at too much profundity, surprising in a young composer.

Edgar Oganesyan is another highly talented Armenian composer, the author of a well-written piano quintet (1956). Rich in melodies and truly national, this work is permeated with manfully-restrained lyricism. At the same time it is youthfully playful, elegant, joyous, especially the appealing finale built up on dance rhythms. A common idea—the epigraph—occurs in all the movements, serving as a unifying factor. The quintet gained Oganesyan a silver medal at the contest of the Sixth Youth and Students Festival.

Other chamber compositions by young Soviet composers are R. Bunin's Viola Sonata, B. Chaikovsky's Piano Trio, M. Marutayev's two quartets and the quartets by V. Basner and K. Orbelyan. For all their variety, these compositions are written in the modern idiom and show their authors' personalities and searchings.

2. VOCAL

Chamber vocal miniatures, the genre the Russians call *romance*, the French *melodie* and the Germans *Lied*, occupied a very prominent place in Russian classical music up to, and including, Rachmaninov and Medtner. The fate of this genre in Soviet art has been rather peculiar. Like chamber instrumental music, in the years immediately after the October Revolution, romance played no noticeable role in Soviet music; life called for the expression of mass emotions that would find response in the hearts of the ordinary people's heroes, the soldiers of the Revolution.

When the composers did write romances, they often slavishly adhered either to tradition or to the refined style characteristic of the pre-revolutionary years, which, naturally, gave them no key to the hearts of the people.

So chamber vocal music was a genre in the cultivation of which Soviet composers lagged behind the longest. They failed to introduce anything new and vital in this sphere, or to find the means by which to express the complexity and depth of the spiritual life of *contemporary* man. Such was the situation until the late forties. It would be pertinent to recall here that for a long time Soviet composers understood the term "the development of the Russian classical tradition in music" one-sidedly, attaching to it a too narrow meaning. The term "tradition"—for some reason or other—was understood to mean the repetition of a type of romance-confession, a lyrical monologue built up on a broad cantilena, i.e., vocal miniature as represented in the work of Chaikovsky and Rachmaninov. Lyrical romances of this type were composed by R. Glière, N. Rakov, Y. Kochurov and Y. Shaporin. The best of these works are performed by Soviet singers.

The colourist, "Oriental" trend of Rimsky-Korsakov (and to some extent, Rachmaninov) was continued by Georgian and Armenian composers—D. Arakishvili, M. Balanchivadze, Z. Paliashvili and A. Spendiarov.

The romances by all these composers were the repetition of former achievements and did not solve the problem of new, Soviet lyrical vocal music. True, some of them were marked by great sincerity, emotionality and contained expressive melodies, as for example, Y. Shaporin's *Faraway Youth* vocal cycle, very convincingly conveying the exquisite and unique poetry of A. Blok's "Silence Casts on Me a

FROM JEWISH FOLK POETRY, vocal cycle by D. Shostakovich performed at the Small Hall of the Moscow Conservatoire, 1955.
D. Shostakovich at the piano. Standing: Nina Dorliak and Alexei Maslennikov (singers); sitting: Tamara Antipova (singer)

Composer Alexei Machavariani

Singer Zara Dolukhanova

Composer Zara Levina

Charm," "The Waning Autumn Day," "Those Days Are Past," and others. This cycle of elegiac poems is an original offspring of Medtner's lyrico-philosophical romances, containing at the same time some traits of the more direct and unsophisticated romance style of Chaikovsky and Rachmaninov, particularly the prominent part assigned to the essentially melodious piano accompaniment.

The intermediate genre of romance-popular song, combining the simplicity and emotional "universality" of song with individual lyrical subject-matter, had a certain significance in its time. To this genre belong the brilliant songs by T. Khrennikov to Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing* (produced at the Vakhtangov Theatre in Moscow in 1937) which are sung to this day.

But "Russian classical tradition" is a broader notion than just the lyrical romances (dealing chiefly with love) of Chaikovsky and Rachmaninov. In the 19th century the vocal miniatures of Dargomyzhsky and Mussorgsky constituted a distinct trend, or sphere, and they dealt with much broader themes, ranging from social subjects and genre pictures to deeply psychological works. And it was this novel trend, extremely variable, allowing of searches—indeed it was too novel for the 19th century and remained unappreciated and little cultivated—that was for a long time lost sight of in Soviet music. And yet its development could have afforded—and did afford when the composers turned to it—immense possibilities for the portraying of the spiritual world of our contemporaries. Shostakovich's vocal cycle *From Jewish Folk Poetry* (1948), first given its public performance in Moscow in January 1955, proved a milestone on the road along which the genre developed.

Shostakovich conceived the idea of composing this cycle after reading the "Jewish Folk Songs" literary collection published in Moscow in 1947. The best of the verses in the collection appealed to him by their vivid imagery, child-like simplicity, original national colour and combination of tense inner dramatism with bitter humour. While utilizing the words of Jewish folk songs, the composer, however, did not use a single genuine tune. The music in the cycle, written in his own individual idiom, is a truly Russian music *about* another nation, it is profoundly humane and shows a thorough understanding of the psychology of this nation. The composer introduces certain musical devices characteristic of Jewish music (the scale with two augmented seconds, for instance). The story in the cycle is told by different personages (the songs are written for soprano, contralto and tenor), and

this enables the composer freely to alternate dramatic or songful numbers for soli with dialogues ("Before a Long Separation," "The Forsaken Father"), or even with operatic scenes in which two of the three voices remain in the background, like a chorus, while one is given prominence ("Happiness," "Winter").

Shostakovich's gift to draw a psychological portrait with a few touches places him close to Mussorgsky. A comparison of "gloomy dancing"—Mussorgsky's "Trepak" in *Songs and Dances of Death* and Shostakovich's "Song of Want"—and the short semi-recitative monologues often encountered in Mussorgsky's other cycles (*The Nursery*, *Sunless*) and Shostakovich's "Warning," makes this particularly clear.

The order of the individual songs in Shostakovich's *From Jewish Folk Poetry* shows an inner connection between them, even a plot depicting the fate of a simple "little" man, a poor Jew.

The first song, "Lament over a Dead Babe," unfolds before the listener a series of tragic events, shows a life of poverty and suffering where death from starvation threatened a human being from the moment of birth. The second and third songs ("Solicitous Mama and Auntie" and "Lullaby") depict childhood scenes. Simple nursery rhymes are used to portray the two fussy women whose care about the baby verges on the comic. Next comes the beautiful and grave image of the mother tenderly telling her son about his father—a revolutionary exiled to Siberia.

The three songs dealing with youth ("Before a Long Separation," "Warning" and "The Forsaken Father") draw a gloomy picture.

Youth in poverty has no hope of happiness: true love ends in a bitter and bleak separation; lightheartedness bodes nothing but evil; the only escape for a beautiful and ambitious but poor Jewish girl is in renouncing her parents, becoming a Christian and marrying "His Honour the police officer." The song "Forsaken Father" shows a dramatic collision between Elie, the old-clothes man, and his daughter, which reaches a climax at the close, when the old man's frenzied appeal, "My daughter, come back!" and her cold and cruel words, "Take away the old Jew!" are heard together.

But what about those who are in love and defying poverty and misfortunes venture to try and build up a life for themselves? This is the subject of the following section of the cycle, its climax ("Song of Want," "Winter"). The first of these songs is characterized by bitter humour, "tearful laughter," while the second is an undisguised expres-

sion of boundless sorrow. Blending with a "grumbling" accompaniment, the human voices imitate the sound of a snow-storm howling outside an unheated hut. "Winter" has much in common with the opening song of the cycle: in both the music, at first restrainedly sad, grows more dramatic until it becomes a shriek of despair (in "Winter" at the words "Cry out, weep, children!").

The song seems to be the tragic climax of the cycle, perhaps even the tragic denouement of the plot. This latter surmise is borne out by the fact that the two songs following it do not contribute to the further development of the plot. Here the composer is speaking and the scene shifts to wide fields and meadows, to another, bright world. This method of contrast serves Shostakovich to very subtly introduce a new theme, that of the people freed by the October Revolution.

"Happiness" is the epilogue closing the cycle. In this colourful, kindly humorous genre scene the composer shows the autumn in his "little people's" life; they find happiness in their old age.

Almost simultaneously with Shostakovich's cycle the public became acquainted with the vocal cycles by Georgy (Yury) Sviridov. His works have enriched this particular sphere with many novel elements, and have become favourite concert items.

The Country of the Fathers, a vocal poem for tenor and bass with piano to words by the famous Armenian poet Avetik Isaakyan, was composed by Sviridov in 1950 and first performed in Leningrad in November 1953. In his cycle the composer used eleven of Isaakyan's poems, written before and after the Revolution (translated into Russian by A. Blok and by Soviet poets). The content of the poem is varied: "the glory of the fathers," the recollections of feats of valour, the theme of labour, a poor man's dreams about bread and happiness, the theme of exile, of nostalgia and homecoming.

Sviridov's creative personality is well attuned to epic narrative in the folk vein. Like Shostakovich, he has written Russian music about another nation, whose psychology, history and poetry he has made the subject of close study. Sviridov was more interested in the sphere of popular heroics, in the epic element, the grand and simple feelings of the people, rather than that of individual dramatic emotions, or the refined personal sensations of individuals.

The cycle opens with the prologue "The Glory of the Fathers" and closes with "My Native Country," the epilogue, a grand picture of the

tragic past on the one hand and the bright morning of the country's happiness, the jubilant ending of the work, on the other.

The lyrical songs of the cycle are distinguished by artlessness and candid emotionality; they deal with an exile's dreams of home ("Off on a Long Journey," "The Smoke of My Hearth," "To My Mother"), with a warrior bidding farewell to his near and dear before battle ("Sister"). In "The Song of Bread" and "I Had a Melon Patch" a folk bard, *gusan*, glorifies labour, accompanying his singing on a folk instrument. Several of the songs deal with the tragic episodes of battle, death on the battle-field and feats of valour. The epilogue presents Armenia today with its undulating wheat fields; the thoughts of the poet go back to the past, but he finds consolation in the peaceful life of his home. The music gradually swells to a life-asserting hymn to labour and Motherland. The conclusion is that people's happiness has been finally won through unremitting effort and fighting.

Another vocal cycle by Sviridov to win great popularity is the one with the modest title of *Songs to Lyrics by Robert Burns* (1955). In it the composer again depicts the life of the people and in accord with the content of Burns' poems pays particular attention to the genre element, the life of simple village maidens and swains, their joys and sorrows.

The nine songs of the cycle arranged on the contrasting principle make a colourful suite describing the life of a simple Scotch "highland lad." The suite is built up around his wanderings on the life's road: the birth of a peasant boy ("Rantin', Rovin' Robin"), the hardships of soldiering ("The Sodger's Return," "The Highland Laddie"), the young Scotsman's love ("Wha Is That at My Bower Door?", "My Luve Is Like a Red, Red Rose"), the resignation to the inevitable old age ("But Lately Seen in Gladsome Green," "John Anderson, My Jo")—all of these are wise and expressive pictures from the life of an ordinary man. The songs expressing social protest occupy a place apart; these are "Gane Is the Day, and Mirk's the Night" and "A Man's a Man for a' That." The first begins as a simple drinking song and gradually develops into a dramatic expression of elemental protest of the needy poor, the second (the closing song of the cycle), full of juicy folk humour, sings of faith in the future when all men around shall be brothers.

To quote Prof. M. Druskin, who made Sviridov's music the subject of his study: "Two cycles, two creative approaches. Some may prefer *The Country of the Fathers*, others the Burns songs; in one case there is

Alexander Davidenko

Matvei Blanter

Boris Alexandrov

Yury Milyutin

more genre diversity, more of life's contrasts, in the other the composer's whole attention is focussed on giving expression to an integral and harmonious folk character. The Isaakyan cycle is more dramatic, with here and there acutely intense emotions in the music, the general colour of the Burns cycle is mellower, warmer, characterized by a wise restraint. One thing is indisputable—the outstanding artistic and ideological significance of the two works."

In 1956 Sviridov turned to one of the best Russian poets of our century—to Sergei Yesenin. After composing the vocal-symphonic poem *In Memory of Sergei Yesenin* the composer was long under the spell of his poetry and wrote seven songs making up a new cycle entitled *My Father Is a Peasant.*

In these songs the talented composer depicts the beautiful, poetic and concrete pictures from the life of the Russian peasantry. His touchingly-pure Russian landscapes ("Rus Lights up My Heart," "The Sledge"), his scenes from life ("Recruits," "In the Evening"), as well as the slightly stylized lyrical miniature ("Accordion")—are all rooted deep in the soil, permeated with the peasant psychology "without embellishments, without gilding," as Mussorgsky used to put it.

The characteristic feature of "The Birch-tree" and "The Nightingale Has One Song" is heart-felt lyricism; the last-named, the poet's sad monologue about his own fate, not merely closes the cycle but adds to it a finishing touch of typically-Yesenian sorrowful, even tragic, musings.

First performed in Moscow in December 1957, Sviridov's song cycle *My Father Is a Peasant* met with great approval and soon made a permanent place for itself in concert programmes.

In the mid-fifties Soviet composers in general took to writing more romances than before. Even those who hitherto had worked exclusively in the field of instrumental music or popular songs more and more frequently turned to this genre. It looks as though the long hoped-for change for the better has taken place in this sphere, too. In January 1956 the Union of Composers in Moscow sponsored a series of recitals under the general title of *Evenings of Soviet Romance* where, along with the Burns cycle by Sviridov, were performed the *Shakespeare Sonnets* by D. Kabalevsky, romances by Z. Levina, V. Shebalin, N. Rakov, M. Kuss, M. Glukh, Y. Shaporin, Y. Levitin, I. Admoni and many other composers, chiefly resident in Moscow and Leningrad. The

audiences were delighted with the freshness and expressiveness of many of these works.

Special mention should be made of Kabalevsky's music for ten of Shakespeare's sonnets. The theme of these poems is love in its loftiest, most harmonious and philosophical aspect. The composer has succeeded in correctly treating the words in the developing sonnet form—with the climax at the end. His melodies are plastic, songful, his piano accompaniment very expressive. It is a pity, however, that the ten sonnets are somewhat alike, even a little monotonous, and that is why they are best performed singly and not one after another as a series. It should be admitted that the composer has failed to compose a cycle in the true meaning of the word.

Zara Levina's romances to words by the Armenian poets Sylvia Kaputikyan and Ovanes Shiraz are an acquisition of Soviet lyrical vocal music of recent times. These songs are sincere and poetical, and each successfully conveys the poem's leading idea; every word rings clear, and the accompaniment possesses an intense inner expressiveness.

The talented Georgian composers of the middle generation Alexei Machavariani and Archil Chimakadze, too, have made a contribution to Soviet vocal miniature.

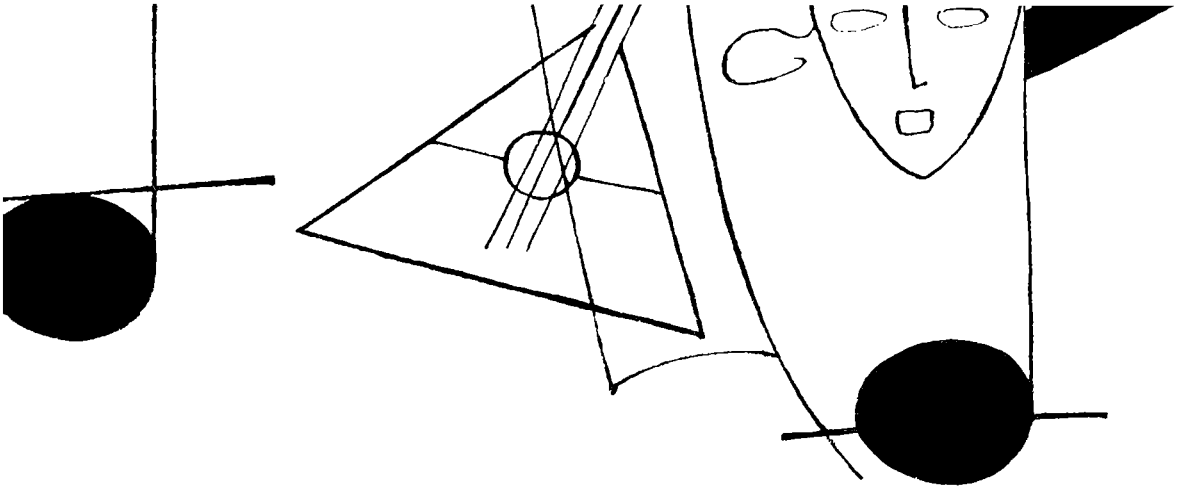
In his temperamental, stirringly romantic songs revealing their author's fine sense of colour ("The Blue Colour," "Forget Sorrow," "My Heart Is Cold," "It Would Befit Thee to Be the Queen of Georgia") Machavariani shows himself a born lyrical poet.

Chimakadze's songs are manlier, more emotionally restrained, with always a profound idea behind them. His lyricism is somewhat austere, sometimes sad and always attractive in its high ethical content ("Lullaby," "Your Tresses," "I Saw a Warrior").

Otar Taktakishvili has recently written some brilliant vocal cycles to words by the Georgian poets Vazha Pshavela and Galaktion Tabidze.

We cannot, in this brief review, mention all that is interesting and original (already composed and being composed by Soviet composers) in Soviet lyrical vocal music. The important thing is that today we cannot say, as was the case some seven or eight years ago, that vocal miniature, the genre of romance, is lagging behind in Soviet music. The flowering of this genre came late, but the flowering is luxuriant and holding bright prospects for the future.

POPULAR SONG AND OPERETTA



Anyone who has ever tuned his wireless set in to Moscow knows well its sign call: the first phrase *Soviet land, so dear to every toiler*, of the refrain of Dunayevsky's "Song of the Fatherland" performed by the ringing, slightly vibrating bell timbre. This song has made its way to the hearts of Soviet people and is there to stay. Some partisan detachments active in Nazi-occupied regions in 1942-43 instituted a kind of examination each new member had to pass: he had to sing the "Song of the Fatherland"—an enemy disguised as a partisan would not know it but there was no Soviet man who did not.

The whole world knows Shostakovich's "Song of the Young Workers" which has now become the song of international solidarity; Blanter's "Katyusha" (in war time it was the militant hymn of Italian guerillas), Dzerzhinsky's "From Border to Border" sung with such feeling by Paul Robeson.... Ordinary people throughout the world find in these songs the reflection of their own feelings and aspirations.

Soviet popular song is a musical genre born of revolutionary reality. It had taken shape by the early thirties and became a kind of musical chronicle of the events in the life of the Soviet people.

Its sources are, on the one hand, daring, virile and austere revolutionary songs, calling to battle, from the "Marseillaise," the "Varsovienne" and "Comrades, the Bugles Are Calling" to the "Internationale," and on the other, various genres of popular, everyday music, such as

the urban romance, village ditty (*chastushka*), the old drawn-out peasant song, and the characteristic rhythms of different dances and marches.

At the different stages of popular song development, one or another of the sources gained prominence. In the thirties the widest popularity was enjoyed by marching songs: the boisterous "March of the Jolly Fellows," the march from the film *The Goalkeeper*, the life-asserting "Song of the Fatherland" and "The Enthusiasts' March" by Dunayevsky; "Meadowland" by Knipper; "From Border to Border" and "Cossack Song" by Dzerzhinsky, and also songs with broad melodies in the Russian style, such as "Along the Village Street," "Seeing Home," "Wishing You Health," "Green Spaces," "Who Knows His Mind" by Zakharov. There were patriotic themes—the "Machine-Gun Cart" by Listov; "If Tomorrow Brings War" and "Three Tankmen" by the Pokrass brothers, and many others. Songs in the march rhythm but with a lyrical subject were very widespread; they usually dealt with the recollections of the Civil War, its heroes and one's fellow-soldiers. To this type belong the "Kakhovka" by Dunayevsky, "Eaglet" by Bely, "Partisan Zheleznyak" by Blanter. Of another type were songs in the rhythm of some dance, say the waltz, or fox-trot. "The Seagull" waltz by Milyutin, "The Moonlight Waltz" by Dunayevsky, and the "Katyusha" fox-trot by Blanter can be given as examples.

In the years of the Great Patriotic War popular songs helped tremendously to boost the spirit of the Soviet people in their fight against fascism. The very first days of war gave birth to A. Alexandrov's famous song *Sacred War* to words by Lebedev-Kumach, a song filled with the spirit of heroism, austere manfulness and energy. With its clear-cut pace of a three-time march, its resolute melody reminiscent of revolutionary hymns, and great expressiveness, it became the musical banner of Soviet patriotic warriors in the hard years of war.

Along with patriotic songs there appeared a profusion of manfully-lyrical songs, with appealing melodies, profoundly Russian in style and somewhat pensive in mood, warming the Soviet soldier with thoughts of home, peaceful life and his sweetheart waiting for him. Among these are the beautiful "Beloved City," "The Komsomol Song," "Play, My Accordion," "Nightingales" by Solovyov-Sedoi and "Russia" by Novikov, which won the love of the entire nation. Side by side with them existed songs bristling with pungent soldier humour, in the style of urban dances, for instance, "On the Sun-lit Glade," "Beyond the River

Kama" by Solovyov-Sedoi, "Vasya-Vasilyok" by Novikov and "Under the Balkan Stars" by Blanter.

Fight for peace, friendship among the nations, and the international solidarity of the working people are the predominant themes of post-war Soviet songs. The melodic elements of these songs are close to those of revolutionary marching songs; their melodies are declamatory, with energetic calls, the accompaniments are sparing. Often songs of this type fall into two sections: a sombre introductory verse in a minor key, speaking of the danger of war, and a major, energetic and optimistic refrain, speaking of the friendship and solidarity of the nations in their fight for peace. This type of song was first introduced by Novikov in his famous "World Democratic Youth Song" composed in 1947, and followed by Shostakovich ("Song for Peace"), Tulikov ("We're for Peace," "March of the Soviet Youth"), Bely ("In Defence of Peace"), and Muradeli ("Hymn of the International Union of Students," "Moscow-Peking," "Song of Peace Champions" and others). Many of these songs enjoy world popularity and have won prizes for their authors at international youth and student festivals in Prague, Budapest, Berlin, Bucharest, Warsaw and Moscow.

* * *

The Soviet people honour their song composers. Often, however, a song becomes so popular that the name of the creator is lost sight of: it is sung with alterations introduced by the people, and folk-song collectors have on more than one occasion recorded works actually written by present-day composers but living among the people in their own variants.

The earliest contribution to Soviet song was made by Alexander Davidenko. One of the most active members of the *Prokoll*, Davidenko strove to compose songs closest to the people's musical practice, songs on the revolutionary theme, on the theme of the Civil War. His songs—"The First Cavalry Army," "Budyonny's Squadron," "Rifle," "They Were Out to Beat Us"—were distinguished by their energy and volitional drive. In the late twenties and early thirties they were sung by choral companies at May Day demonstrations—along with the songs of Marian Koval, Boris Shekhter and other *Prokoll* members—but later were forgotten. The reason was that these song-slogans were too abstract, utterly devoid of lyricism and human warmth.

The heyday of Soviet popular song came when the composers hit upon combining the revolutionary march and anthem tradition with the appeal and emotional directness of dance and song tunes performed at home and on the variety stage. This happened in the thirties with the advent of the sound films for which the music was written by composers who had made a name for themselves in the sphere of popular or "light" music (operetta, variety-stage, jazz). Another trend was cultivated by choral composers who headed big choruses.

In this heterogeneous agglomeration throve the talents of the composers destined to become the classics of Soviet song—Isaak Dunayevsky, Vladimir Zakharov, Matvei Blanter, Alexander Alexandrov, and later, Anatoly Novikov and Vasily Solovyov-Sedoi.

Isaak Dunayevsky became famous overnight on the release in Moscow of G. Alexandrov's musical film *The Jolly Fellows* with Leonid Utesov and Lyubov Orlova in the lead. The typically jazz resilience of rhythms combined with youthful spirits, optimism and warmth of feeling endeared Dunayevsky's music to all. In no small measure the songs owed their popularity to the bright and aphoristic lyrics by Lebedev-Kumach. They were sung by old and young, they were sung everywhere—on the concert stage, at home, in trains and streets. After *The Jolly Fellows* Dunayevsky composed music for *Three Comrades*, *The Course of a Ship* (1935), *The Circus*, *The Seekers of Happiness*, *Captain Grant's Children*, *The Goalkeeper* (1936), *The Rich Bride* (1937), *Volga-Volga* (1938), *The Bright Road* (1939).

Later few people remembered that the famous "Kakhovka" was a song from the film *Three Comrades*, that the "Song of the Fatherland" was the finale of *The Circus* and the song "Merry Wind" so beloved of Soviet youth was sung by young Robert sitting on the mast of the *Duncan* (*Captain Grant's Children*). Leaving the screen, these songs entered everyday life, because they were full of energy, optimism, faith in the future—feelings close to the hearts of Soviet people. If Shostakovich's "Song of the Young Workers" from *The Counterplan* (1932) was the first swallow heralding the coming of spring, Dunayevsky's songs pouring in a torrent from the screen announced that spring was there. They created a trend in Soviet music followed by the Pokrass brothers—Dmitry and Daniil—Zinovy Kompaneyets, Konstantin Listov, Victor Bely and Yury Milyutin.

Together with Dunayevsky the thirties brought to the fore another original composer of songs in the person of Vladimir Zakharov, a con-

noisseur of Russian peasant folk-lore, who devoted his works to the collective-farm countryside. From 1931 until his death Zakharov was the artistic director of the Pyatnitsky Russian Folk Choir, a company that upholds the singing traditions of the peasants of Central Russia (Voronezh, Tambov and Smolensk regions).

The first of Zakharov's songs—"Along the Village Street," to words by Isakovsky appeared in 1934, to be followed by "The Road" and "Two Falcons." They are written in the typically Russian style of choral songs with collateral parts; their melodic and modal structure is also that of folk songs. At the same time Zakharov breathed new life into the peasant song by introducing into it some melodic elements and rhythms associated with urban folk-lore, and, what is more important, a new outlook.

Zakharov developed the principles of the brief witty ditty—*chastushka*—sung to the accompaniment of accordion in his merry and whimsical "Wishing You Health" and "The Girls Have Come Out"; but his best songs are in the originally treated genre of lyrical maiden songs popularly called "the plaints." He has poeticized songs of this type, capturing their warmth and gentle humour with exquisite skill, as in "Who Knows His Mind," "Seeing Home." Zakharov is also the author of several songs on the war and partisan fight themes ("O Ye Mists," "Under a Willow in the Field," "About Katyusha") and on the theme of the post-war peaceful labour ("Hands of Gold"). Although his songs are comparatively few in number Zakharov is the acknowledged founder of an original trend in popular song, a trend enriching popular musical practice and never departing from the demands of good taste.

Matvei Blanter, the author of the celebrated "Katyusha" to words by Isakovsky, won recognition as a master of song at the end of the thirties. Before that he had worked in the sphere of variety and dance music; hence his ability to create simple melodies based on the melodic elements and rhythms of popular urban music, which are easy to remember. We have already mentioned the world-wide popularity of his "Katyusha" which, after it had had a tremendous success at home, became the fighting song of Italian partisans. Among his other songs "Song About Stalin" to words by Surkov (1938), "Partisan Zheleznyak" and "The Whole Country Sings With Us" used to be very popular. In the forties, lyricism combined with a patriotic theme served to make popular such of his songs as "Under the Balkan Stars," "In the Front-line Forest" and "Birds of Passage Fly Above," all to lyrics by Isakov-

sky. True, in the fifties a change came over Blanter's work and his new songs rarely contain vivid and expressive images capable of conquering the people's hearts.

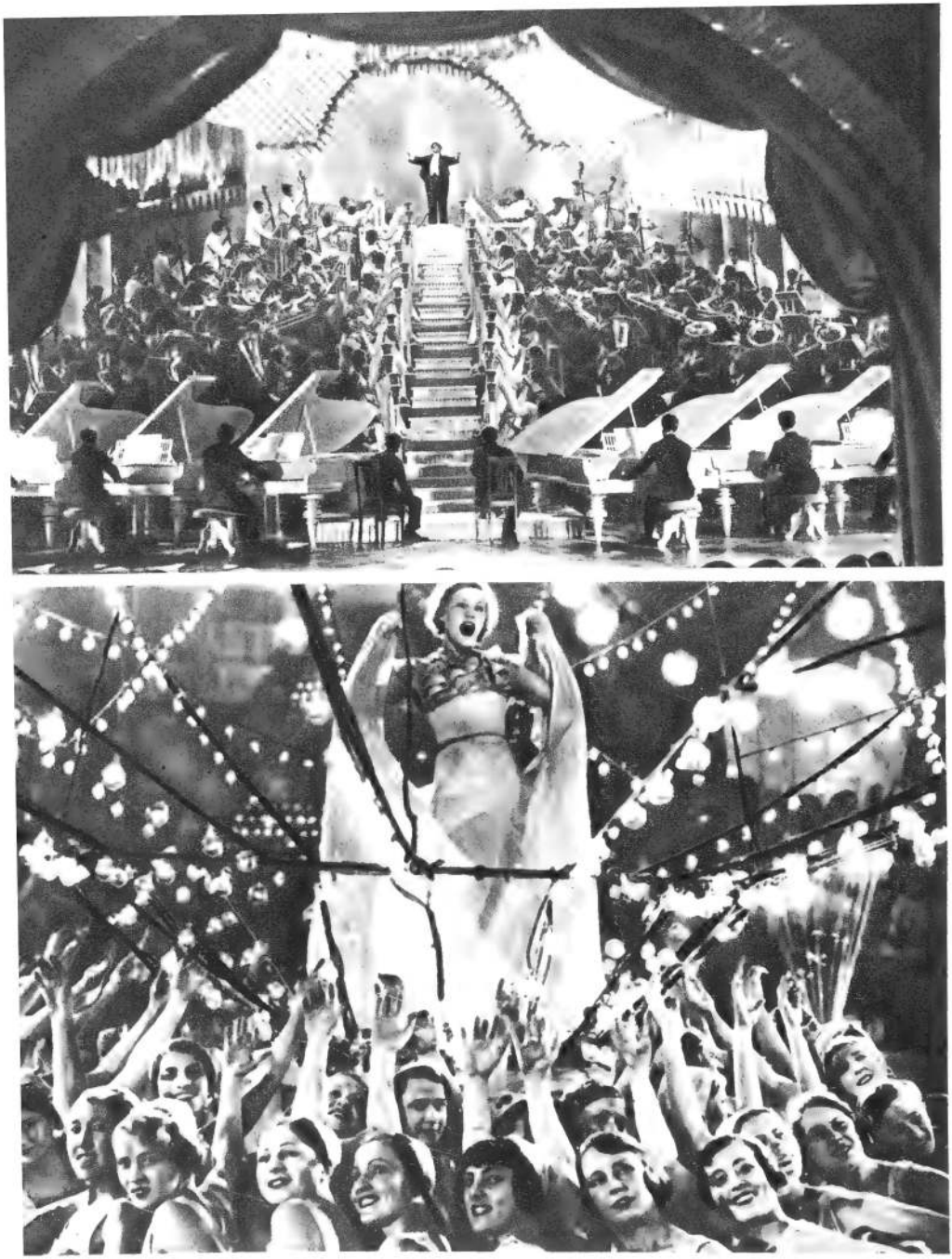
Alexander Alexandrov, composer and choirmaster, the founder and for many years director of the Soviet Army Song and Dance Ensemble, is known in the history of popular song as the author of the Soviet National Anthem (1944) and a number of choral songs and cantatas ("Cantata about Stalin," "Sacred War"). His splendid choral arrangements of folk songs—Russian "The Vorobyovy Hills," "Rustle Not, O Green Oak Copse," "White Snows") and Ukrainian ("Unsaddle Your Horses, Lads!")—as well as of Civil War marching songs ("O'er Glades and Hills," "Down the Road," "From Beyond the Forest"), were extremely popular in their time.

His "World Democratic Youth Song" to lyrics by Lev Oshanin (1947) has won Anatoly Novikov world fame. A perfect master of choral style who for many years had directed worker and soldier choruses, Novikov is the author of a great variety of songs. The most popular among them are the songs in a markedly Russian style; these may roughly be divided into two categories: humorous genre scenes from soldier life based on Russian dance rhythms, such as "Vasya-Vasilyok," "Samovars—Automatic Guns" and lyrical songs in the nature of the Russian romance, speaking of love for one's country—"Roads," "Russia." Novikov's best songs were written in the forties.

The most important name in the field of song of the war and post-war period is that of Vasily Solovyov-Sedoi. It is of him that one thinks first in speaking of the new song trend that has superseded the optimistic pre-war marching songs. This trend is characterized by the predominance in melodies of the Russian folk-song element, a phenomenon intimately connected with the universal upsurge of patriotism inspired by the war. In songs of this type the composers have called to life a host of the most varied melodic elements characteristic of Russian folk song.

Solovyov-Sedoi's songs of the war years present an original combination of the melodic structure of popular Russian lyrical music (ditty—*chastushka*, accordion tunes, songs of the workers' districts, as well as urban and village songs) with certain devices of classical music (the waltz rhythms, recitative phrases, broad melodic development). Manful poetry—soldier friendship, love of one's country, thoughts about one's family—and wholesome and unsophisticated folk humour are characteristic of Solovyov-Sedoi's songs.

Isaak Dunayevsky



Top photo: still from the film JOLLY FELLOWS

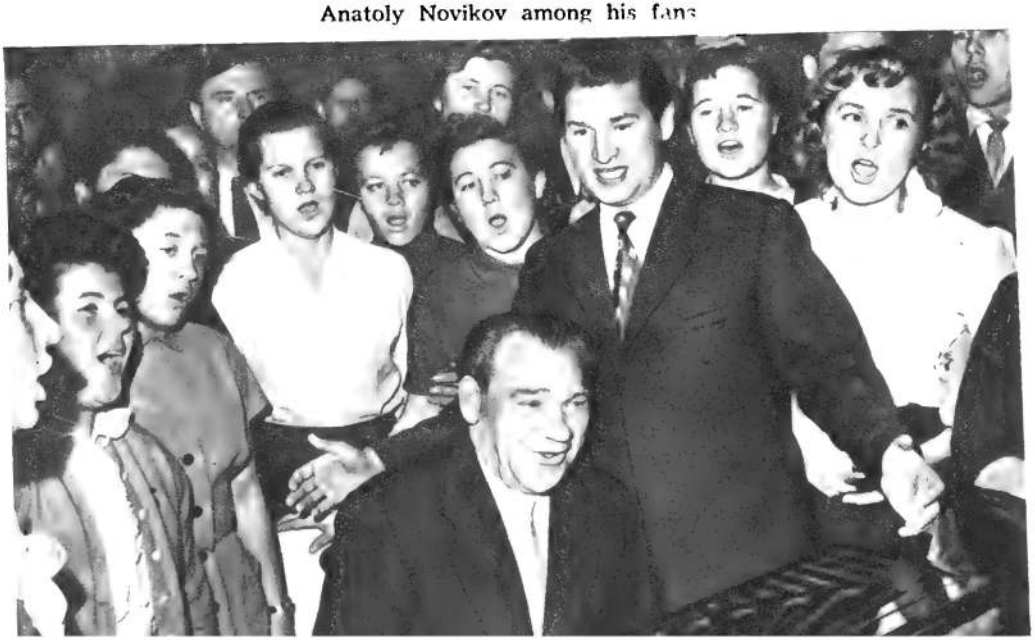
Bottom photo: still from the film CIRCUS.
In the centre: Lyubov Orlova as Marian Anderson

Pyatnitsky Russian Folk Choir

Alexandrov Song and Dance Ensemble of the Soviet Army

Vasily Solovyov-Sedoi

Anatoly Novikov among his fans



"Beloved City" to words by A. Churkin (1941) was one of the wartime favourites. It was sung by soldiers in trenches, sailors on board ships and people in the rear whose thoughts were with their men at the front; it was performed over the air, on the concert stage, at home and at work.

"Sometimes, throughout the entire shift this song would be heard," people recall. "Now one woman worker would sing a stanza, now another, or everyone would join in and sing this beautiful melody, full of poetry and suppressed sadness."

Solovyov-Sedoi's other songs, such as "Why Are You Sad, Mate?" "The Komsomol Song," "On the Sun-lit Glade," "Play, My Accordion," were also popular.

After the war Solovyov-Sedoi composed an interesting vocal cycle entitled *A Soldier's Homecoming*, from which "Nightingales" and "Where Are You, My Brother-Soldiers?" gained wide popularity.

Among his songs of the later years mention should be made of the merry "Time to Take Off," the dreamy and thoughtful "Versts" and "Moscow Evenings," and the lyrical "In the Boat." Some of these were composed as music for a film, others are independent works.

It should be said that even now that the popular song is succumbing to the influence of variety couplets (and not always examples of the best of taste) Solovyov-Sedoi's songs have preserved the purity and national clarity of idiom and their appealing originality. For his songs Solovyov-Sedoi was awarded a Lenin Prize in 1959.

Khrennikov, too, is the author of many songs that have won the hearts of the people, for instance, the songs from the films *They Met in Moscow, The East-bound Train* and others. Other authors of well-known songs are Boris Mokrousov ("The Stone of Sevastopol," "Lonely Accordion," "You and I Were Never Friends"), Yury Milyutin ("Lenin Hills," "Seeing Off the Accordion-player," "Lilacs and Bird-cherry Tree"), Serafim Tulikov ("We're for Peace," "Soviet Youth March"). All these composers, to mention a few, have contributed to the development of this genre, very popular in Soviet music.

* * *

The significance of popular songs is not limited to popularity—that is, their being sung on the concert stage, at home and in the street. Popular songs make their way into the musical theatre, and not only

through the medium of the "song opera," a genre we have discussed above, but through being closely related to Soviet operetta, or musical comedy (this latter term sometimes means a comedy with musical numbers).

This closeness is explained not merely by the fact that certain songs, arias and duets from an operetta resemble popular song and, therefore, easily find their way to everyday musical practice, but also by the fact that music for operettas is usually written by composers who have already made a name for themselves in the sphere of popular song. That is why the history of Soviet operetta dates from the mid-thirties, springing as it did from the melodic elements of popular song.

The twenties, when Dunayevsky (not yet a famous song composer then) wrote his first operettas (*Bridegrooms*, 1926, *Knives*, 1928, *Polar Passions*, 1929) and Strelnikov wrote his *Serf Woman* (1929), marked the beginning of this genre in Soviet music.

The Serf Woman to libretto by V. Rappoport and E. Gerken was destined to live a long life on the stage—it is produced at some Soviet musical-comedy theatres today—and this in spite of certain influences of the so-called neo-Viennese style. Although the conflict in it is rather melodramatic, the music and the plot of this historico-genre operetta contain some sound seeds of a new style, such as a socially-significant subject, typically Russian genre episodes, satirical characterizations of Prince Kutaisov and his retainers—from which subsequently sprang a rich growth of historico-genre operettas, such as *Tobacco Captain* by V. Shcherbachov and *Commotion Among Girls* by Y. Milyutin.

But, as has already been stated, the first refreshingly original operettas only appeared in the mid-thirties. One of them was *The Fair at Sorochintsi* by the Ukrainian composer A. Ryabov, with a libretto by L. Yukhvid after Nikolai Gogol's story. Based on folk-lore melodies, it was an original development of the Ukrainian folk comedy with music.

The first Soviet operetta in the fullest sense of the term, however, was Boris Alexandrov's *Wedding in Malinovka* to libretto by L. Yukhvid, first performed in Moscow in 1937. It was the first operetta to deal with stirring modern (revolutionary) events and the heroes were *positive* personages. The music is in the true national tradition, abounding in poetic broad melodies. The hero Nazar Duma, commander of a partisan detachment, is characterized by the broad song "There grew in a wide field . . ."; other personages, too, are characterized by different song genres: there are the sad, lyrical slow songs of Sophia, the perky

A. Kotova as Yarinka, P. Semkov as Gritsian

V. Volodin as Yashka the artilleryman, T. Bakh as Gapusya

WEDDING IN MALINOVKA, operetta by B. Alexandrov staged by the Moscow Operetta Theatre, 1956

In the centre G. Yaron as Popandopulo

Dances from the operetta TREMBITA by Y. Milyutin staged by the Moscow Operetta Theatre, 1954

WHITE ACACIA, operetta by I. Dunayevsky staged by the Moscow Operetta Theatre, 1956

Above: Scene from act I. In the centre Tatyana Shmyga as Tonya.
Below: dances from act II

CHERYOMUSHKI, MOSCOW, operetta by D. Shostakovich staged by the Moscow Operetta Theatre, 1959

Comic divertissement "Welcome t flat 48" from act II. S. Anikeyev as Barabashkin

Final scene

ditties of Grandpa Nechipor and Gapusya, and the merry songs of Yarinka. The warring detachments, too, have contrasting song characterizations: on the one hand, the manly and rousing song "Unsaddle Your Horses, Lads!" of the partisans, and, on the other, the distorted strains of the "Yablochko" aptly drawing the musical portrait of the Ataman and his riff-raff.

That same year—1937—saw a brilliant operetta by Dunayevsky, that was *The Golden Valley* to libretto by M. Yankovsky, presenting, along with aptly used Georgian and Russian songs, a great number of fascinating lyrical and comic songs, arias and duets, some of which were very popular before the war.

During the last years of his life Dunayevsky devoted much attention to operetta. Moscow saw the performances of his *Free Wind* to libretto by V. Vinnikov, V. Krakht and V. Tipot, 1947, *The Son of a Clown* to libretto by E. Pomeshchikov and V. Tipot, 1950, and the new version of *The Golden Valley,* 1955. His last operetta *White Acacia* composed in 1955 was produced posthumously and is at present in the repertoire of many Soviet theatres. Like the *Free Wind,* the *White Acacia* (libretto by V. Mass and M. Chervinsky) is rich in appealing and easily remembered songs, and in this it is a true creation of Dunayevsky the song-composer. It should be remarked, however, that the extreme topicality of the subjects sometimes influenced adversely the span of his operettas' stage life; from the standpoint of form, his music which is nothing else than a series of long suites of songs lacks dramatic tension and cannot be said to really participate in the development of action. That is why songs from *The Golden Valley, Free Wind* and *White Acacia* quickly shifted to the variety stage where their value is inestimable as independent concert numbers.

Of the numerous operettas produced at Soviet theatres mention should be made of Shcherbachov's *Tobacco Captain* to libretto by N. Aduyev and Y. Milyutin's *Commotion Among Girls* to libretto by M. Galperin and V. Tipot. Their common characteristic is the use of genre media to recreate the atmosphere of old Russia. The action of the *Tobacco Captain* is laid in Peter the Great's time. On the tsar's orders boyar sons had to go and study abroad. A talented Bashkir youth, Akhmet, goes as a substitute for a lazy boyar son. The contrasting national music material—Russian, Oriental, French and Dutch—enabled the composer to write colourful and appealing music, make it part of the dramatic texture, and draw true-to-life characterizations.

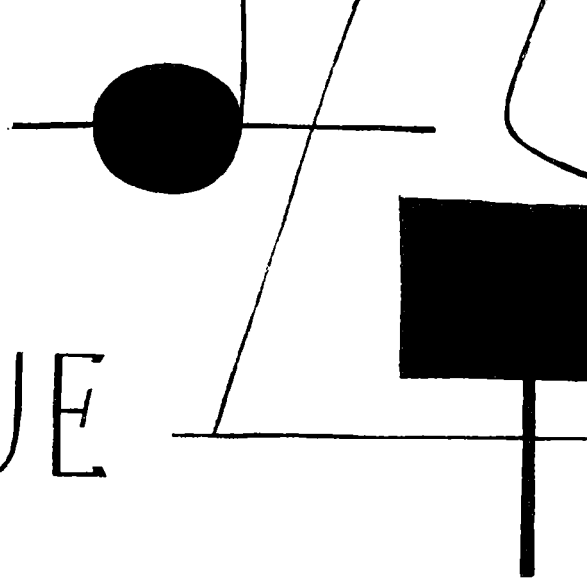
Milyutin's later operettas—*Trembita* to libretto by V. Mass and M. Chervinsky (1951) and *Chanita's Kiss* to libretto by E. Shatunovsky (1957)—are important milestones in his creative development. The best sections in these operettas are associated with Ukrainian and Mexican folk-lore. Solovyov-Sedoi's two operettas—*A True Friend* to libretto by V. Mikhailov (1945) and *The Thing Most Cherished* to libretto by V. Mass and M. Chervinsky (1948-51) tell of the life of Soviet people. The lyricism and warmth of his typically Russian melodies and the gentle humour characteristic of his songs are present in both operettas. The best in *The Thing Most Cherished* are the gay games and dances, the lyrical episodes describing the feelings of Nastya and Pavel (duets), and choruses of collective farmers and of students. However, the plot, which does not hang well together, prevented this operetta from enjoying the popularity its music deserves.

Kabalevsky's operetta *Spring Song* first performed at the Moscow Operetta Theatre on the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of the October Revolution was well received by the public. The music, an integral part of Kabalevsky's "youth" series, is very melodious; there are numerous arias, ensembles and choruses, songs and dances. In spite of a dramaturgically imperfect libretto by C. Solodar, the operetta is a contribution of a great musician, master of large forms, to the development of the genre.

At the end of 1958 the Moscow Operetta Theatre staged a new work of Shostakovich—his operetta *Cheryomushki, Moscow* (to a libretto by V. Mass and M. Chervinsky)—an irresistibly merry and melodious piece. Shostakovich wages a merciless war with Philistinism and banality, ridiculing them with consummate skill in his witty and humorous music. In his own melodies he uses elements of well-known songs, dances and ditties, elevating them and imbuing with a new content. The lively and attractive music has ensured the operetta a lasting success.

Like popular song, Soviet operetta, too, has found recognition abroad and the works of Milyutin, Dunayevsky, and Solovyov-Sedoi are performed with success in Germany, Czechoslovakia, Rumania, Hungary and Bulgaria.

BY WAY OF EPILOGUE



A reader expecting this book to tell him all about Soviet music will have to be disappointed: the author has advisedly limited her task to the history of the most important genres cultivated by Soviet composers, well aware that one cannot cover the subject in all its entirety in one small volume.

Folk music in the Soviet Union, the music of the stage and screen, the conservatoires and concert-giving organizations, opera houses and operetta theatres, and Soviet musicians can serve as subjects of a great number of books.

No attempt has been made to deal comprehensively with all that has been written by Soviet composers: the author strove to select works possessing the greatest artistic value and most representative of Soviet music, to use them as examples in tracing the development of Soviet music during the forty-odd years that have elapsed since the October Revolution of 1917.

With the strengthening of international cultural ties, more and more listeners abroad are coming to know Soviet music. No small part in this is being played by the foreign tours of our pianists, violinists, cellists, conductors, singers and ballet companies. These tours fulfil the noble mission of acquainting foreign audiences with Soviet art, and we are witnessing the growing popularity of Soviet composers in all countries of the world. There are musical societies abroad that bear the

name of Sergei Prokofiev. Dmitry Shostakovich was granted a Jean Sibelius Prize and the title of Doctor *honoris causa* by Oxford University in 1958. In the past only two Russian composers—Chaikovsky and Glazunov—received this honour from Cambridge University.

Publishers and gramophone firms (especially in France and the U.S.A.) are also instrumental in disseminating Soviet music, by publishing music and issuing recordings of Soviet operas, symphonic works, concertos, etc.

Lately the number of tours of European, Asian and American countries undertaken by Soviet composers, has increased, which helps to establish personal contacts and friendly ties between musicians belonging to different schools and trends and promotes their creative emulation. This, in turn, fosters a desire to know one another better and, consequently, to know one another's musical art.

This desire has prompted the appearance of this book. The author shall consider her effort not wasted if the reader learns something new from this book and is stimulated to study an unfamiliar work by a Soviet composer.

NAME INDEX

Admoni Iohann Grigoryevich (b. 1906)—165
Alexandrov Alexander Vasilyevich (1883-1946)—170, 172, 174
Alexandrov Anatoly Nikolayevich (b. 1888)—150
Alexandrov Boris Alexandrovich (b. 1905, son of A. V. Alexandrov)—176
Amirov Fikret Meshadi Jamil oghly (b. 1922)—72, 74, 80, 125
Arakishvili Dmitry Ignatyevich (1873-1953)—8, 160
Aramyan Eduard Aramovich (b. 1930)—145
Arutyunyan Alexander Grigoryevich (b. 1920)—65, 80, 90
Asafyev Boris Vladimirovich (1884-1949)—10, 30, 31, 46, 48, 50, 59, 101, 108, 130-133, 149
Ashrafi Mukhtar Ashrafovich (b. 1912)—8, 77, 125
Auster Lydia Martinovna (b. 1912)—145

Babajanyan Arno Arutyunovich (b. 1921)—79, 157
Babayev Andrei Avanesovich (b. 1923)—125
Balanchivadze Meliton Antonovich (1862-1937)—8, 62, 160
Balanchivadze Andrei Melitonovich (b. 1906, son of M. A. Balanchivadze)—68, 80, 132, 133
Balasanyan Sergei Artemyevich (b. 1902)—8, 65, 125, 145
Balsis Edvardas Kosto (b. 1919)—77
Basner Veniamin Yefimovich (b. 1925)—159
Bely Victor Aronovich (b. 1904)—10, 84, 170-71, 172
Blanter Matvei Isaakovich (b. 1903)—13, 169-174
Bogatyryov Anatoly Vasilyevich (b. 1913)—124
Bruk Genrikh Semyonovich (b. 1905)—84
Brusilovsky Yevgeny Grigoryevich (b. 1905)—8, 125
Bukiya Alexander Ionovich (b. 1906)—125
Bunin Revol Samuilovich (b. 1924)—159

Chaikovsky Boris Alexandrovich (b. 1925)—78, 159
Chemberji Nikolai Karpovich (1903-1948)—10, 84
Chimakadze Archil Ivanovich (b. 1919)—90
Chishko Oles Semyonovich (b. 1895)—107
Chugayev Alexander Georgievich (b. 1924)—78

Dankevich Konstantin Fyodorovich (b. 1905)—123
Davidenko Alexander Alexandrovich (1899-1934)—10, 84, 171
Deshevov Vladimir Mikhailovich (1889-1955)—101
Dunayevsky Isaak Osipovich (1900-1955)—13, 169, 170, 172, 176, 177
Dvarionas Balis Dominico (b. 1904)—77
Dzerzhinsky Ivan Ivanovich (b. 1909)—102, 106-110, 169, 170

Ernesax Gustav Gustavovich (b. 1908)—124
Eshpai Andrei Yakovlevich (b. 1925)—78

Feinberg Samuil Yevgenyevich (b. 1890)—150
Feré Vladimir Georgievich (b. 1902)—8, 125
Filippenko Arkady Dmitrievich (b. 1912)—159

Gajibekov Sultan Ismail oghly (b. 1919)—72, 74, 145
Gajibekov Uzeir Abdul Hussein oghly (1885-1948)—13, 104, 105
Gajiyev Ahmet Jevdet Ismail oghly (b. 1917)—72, 73
Galynin Herman Hermanovich (b. 1922)—13, 77, 158
Garshnek Anatoly Ivanovich (b. 1918)—76
Gladkovsky Arseny Pavlovich (1894-1945)—101
Glazunov Alexander Konstantinovich (1862-1936)—8, 17-19
Glebov Igor—pen name of B. V. Asafyev, *q.v.*—10
Glière Reinhold Moritsevich (1875-1956)—8, 12, 56, 105, 125, 130, 131, 160
Glukh Mikhail Alexandrovich (b. 1907)—165
Gnesin Mikhail Fabianovich (1883-1957)—83
Gomolyaka Vadim Borisovich (b. 1914)—75

Ippolitov-Ivanov Mikhail Mikhailovich (1859-1935)—8
Ivanov Yanis Andreyevich (b. 1906)—13, 76

Jangirov Jangir Shirgesht oghly (b. 1921)—72, 74, 125
Juzeliunas Julius Alexandrovich (b. 1916)—77, 145

Kabalevsky Dmitry Borisovich (b. 1904)—13, 41, 55-56, 89, 102, 106, 113, 119-121, 165, 166, 178
Kapp Artur Iosifovich (1878-1952)—75
Kapp Eugen Arturovich (b. 1908)—13, 75, 124, 145
Kapp Villem Hansovich (b. 1913)—76
Karayev Kara Abdulfaz oghly (b. 1918)—13, 72, 73, 80, 130, 140-142
Kasyanov Alexander Alexandrovich (b. 1891)—122
Khachaturyan Aram Ilyich (b. 1903)—12, 13, 59-64, 78, 79, 88, 130, 132, 138-140, 151
Khoja-Einatov Leon Alexandrovich (1904-1954)—64, 106, 107
Khrennikov Tikhon Nikolayevich (b. 1913)—13, 102, 106, 109, 110, 113, 161
Klova Vitautas Julius (b. 1926)—124
Klyuzner Boris Lazarevich (b. 1909)—58
Knipper Lev Konstantinovich (b. 1898)—56, 101, 170
Kochurov Yury Vladimirovich (b. 1907)—160
Kompaneyets Zinovy Lvovich (b. 1902)—172
Koval Marian Victorovich (b. 1907)—10, 84, 88, 171
Kozlovsky Alexei Fyodorovich (b. 1905)—77
Krein Alexander Abramovich (1883-1951)—83, 130, 132, 134
Kuss Margarita Ivanovna (b. 1921)—165

Leman Albert Semyonovich (b. 1915)—77
Lensky Alexander Stepanovich (b. 1910)—8, 145
Levina Zara Alexandrovna (b. 1907)—10, 84, 165, 166
Levitin Yury Abramovich (b. 1912)—165
Listov Konstantin Yakovlevich (b. 1900)—170, 172
Lyatoshinsky Boris Nikolayevich (b. 1895)—74, 75

Machavariani Alexei Davidovich (b. 1913)—13, 68, 91, 130, 142-144
Magomayev Abdul Muslim Magometovich (1885-1937)—104
Maiboroda Georgy Illarionovich (b. 1913)—75
Maldybayev Abdylas (b. 1906)—125
Marutayev Mikhail Alexandrovich (b. 1926)—159
Meitus Yuly Sergeyevich (b. 1903)—107, 123
Milyutin Yury Sergeyevich (b. 1903)—170, 172, 175, 177, 178
Mokrousov Boris Andreyevich (b. 1909)—175
Molchanov Kirill Vladimirovich (b. 1922)—122
Mosolov Alexander Vasilyevich (b. 1900)—150

Mshvelidze Shalva Mikhailovich (b. 1904)—13, 62, 66, 67, 80
Mukhatov Velimuhamed (b. 1916)—77, 125
Muradeli Vano Ilyich (b. 1908)—171
Mushel Georgy Alexandrovich (b. 1909)—77
Myaskovsky Nikolai Yakovlevich (1881-1950)—8, 12, 13, 40-46, 50, 58-60, 62, 77, 79, 83, 89, 149-153

Normet Leo Tarmovich (b. 1922)—124
Novikov Anatoly Grigoryevich (b. 1896)—13, 170-172, 174

Oganesyan Edger Sergeyevich (b. 1930)—145, 159
Orbelyan Konstantin Agaparonovich (b. 1928)—159
Ovezov Dangatar (b. 1911)—125

Paliashvili Zakhary Petrovich (1871-1933)—8, 12, 102, 103, 160
Pashchenko Andrei Filippovich (b. 1885)—101
Peiko Nikolai Ivanovich (b. 1916)—13, 56, 57, 132, 144
Petrov Andrei Pavlovich (b. 1930)—78
Pokrass brothers: Dmitry (b. 1899) and Daniil (1905-1954)—170, 172
Polovinkin Leonid Alexeyevich (1894-1949)—150
Popov Gavriil Nikolayevich (b. 1904)—58
Prokofiev Sergei Sergeyevich (1891-1953)—7, 12, 13, 23, 38, 44, 46-54, 62, 76, 79, 84-88, 90, 102, 106, 111-119, 129, 130, 134-137, 141, 142, 144, 150, 152, 153, 159, 180

Račiunas Antanas Iono (b. 1905)—124
Rakov Nikolai Petrovich (b. 1908)—58, 160, 165
Razoryonov Sergei Alexeyevich (b. 1909)—58
Revutsky Lev Nikolayevich (b. 1889)—75
Rubin Vladimir Ilyich (b. 1924)—122
Ryabov Alexei Panteleimonovich (1899-1955)—176
Ryauzov Sergei Nikolayevich (b. 1905)—84
Rybalchenko Vsevolod Petrovich (b. 1904)—107
Rzayev Azer Hussein oghly (b. 1930)—79

Sadykov Talib (b. 1907)—8, 125
Saifitdinov Sharafiddin Sanginovich (b. 1929)—125
Shantyr Grigory Mikhailovich (b. 1923)—122
Shaporin Yury Alexandrovich (b. 1887)—12, 33, 84, 85, 89, 106, 160, 165
Shaposhnikov Adrian Grigoryevich (b. 1888)—125
Shchedrin Rodion Konstantinovich (b. 1932)—78
Shcherbachov Vladimir Vladimirovich (1889-1952)—176, 177
Shebalin Vissarion Yakovlevich (b. 1902)—58, 122, 153, 165
Shekhter Boris Semyonovich (1900)—10, 84, 171
Shishov Ivan Petrovich (1888-1947)—101
Shostakovich Dmitry Dmitrievich (b. 1906)—12, 17-39, 44, 46, 50, 51, 54, 57-59, 62, 72, 76, 77, 79, 89, 91, 101, 105, 141, 150, 154-157, 161-163, 169, 171, 178, 180
Shtogarenko Andrei Yakovlevich (b. 1902)—75
Skulte Adolph Petrovich (b. 1909)—145
Solovyov-Sedoi Vasily Pavlovich (b. 1907)—13, 132, 144, 170-172, 174, 178
Spadavecchia Antonio Emmanuilovich (b. 1908)—122, 145,
Spendiarov Alexander Afanasyevich (1871-1928)—8, 12, 64, 104, 160
Steinberg Maximilian Osseyevich (1883-1946)—17
Strelnikov Nikolai Mikhailovich (1888-1939)—176
Sviridov Georgy (Yury) Vasilyevich (b. 1915)—13, 91-95, 163-165

Taktakishvili Otar Vasilyevich (b. 1924)—13, 69, 70, 80, 166
Tamberg Eino Martinovich (b. 1930)—79
Tigranyan Armen Tigranovich (1879-1950)—8
Tikotsky Yevgeny Karlovich (b. 1893)—124
Tits Mikhail Dmitrievich (b. 1898)—107

Toradze David Alexandrovich (b. 1922) —145
Tsintsadze Sulkhan Fyodorovich (b. 1925) —145, 158
Tulebayev Mukan Tulebayevich (1913-1960)—125
Tulikov Serafim Sergeyevich (b. 1914)—171, 175

Ustvolskaya Galina Ivanovna (b. 1919)—78

Vasilenko Sergei Nikiforovich (1872-1956)—8, 125
Vlasov Vladimir Alexandrovich (b. 1903) —8, 125
Volkonsky Andrei Mikhailovich (b. 1933) —78, 159

Weinberg Moisei Samuilovich (b. 1919) —58
Yakhin Rustem Mukhamet Khazeyevich (b. 1921)—79
Yarullin Farid Zagidullovich (1914-1943) —145
Yegiazaryan Grigory Yegiazarovich (b. 1908)—65, 145

Zakharov Vladimir Grigoryevich (1901-1956)—170, 172, 173
Zarins Marger Ottovich (b. 1910)—124
Zhelobinsky Valery Victorovich (1913-1946)—107
Zhiganov Nazib Gayazovich (b. 1911)—13, 77, 125
Zolotaryov Vasily Andreyevich (b. 1873) —101

75

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